THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 23, 2006

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BY ROBERT KAGAN

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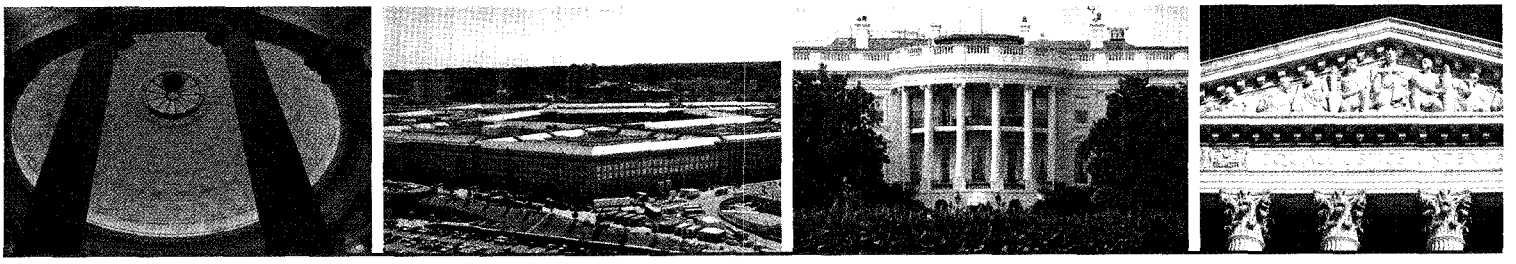

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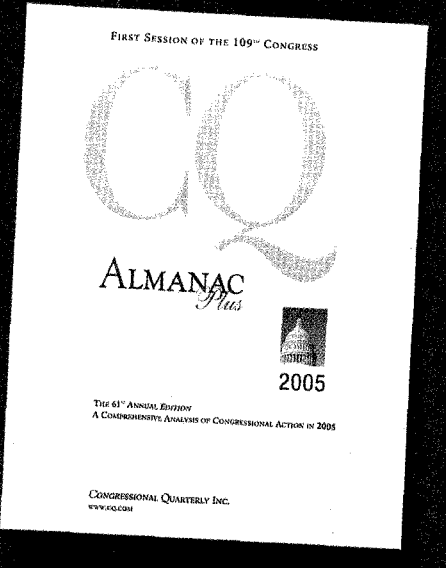

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY *Tim Gabor*

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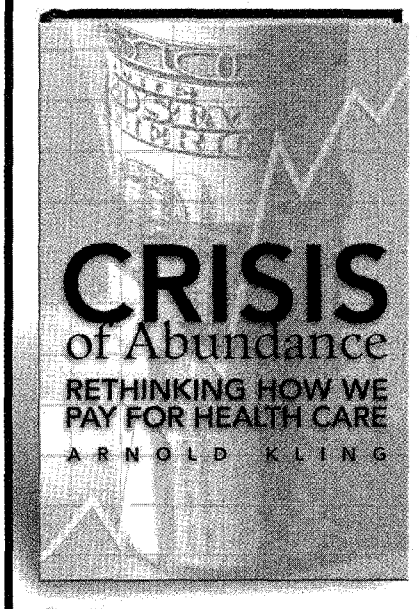
I warmly recommend his book to general readers who want to understand what economics has to say about health care.

— ARNOLD S. RELMAN, M.D.
Harvard Medical School,
writing in *The New England Journal of Medicine*



This is one of the most accessible guides I have ever seen to what is wrong with our health care system and how we might fix it. People of all ideological persuasions will find it enlightening and helpful.

— DANIEL SHAVIRO
Professor of Taxation,
New York University School of Law

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CORRESPONDENCE

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

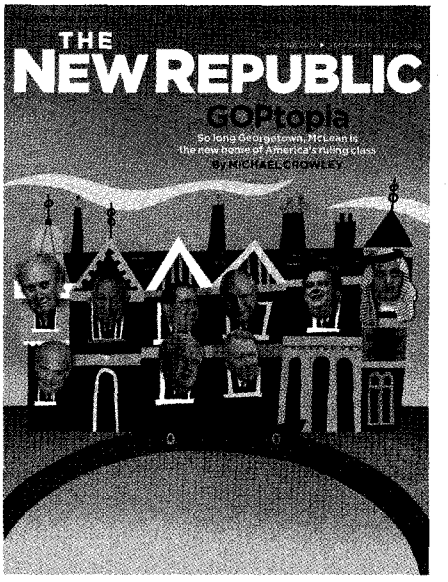
MICHAEL CROWLEY'S ARTICLE asserts that McLean, Virginia, is packed with Republicans ("GOPtopia," September 11 & 18). Simple examination of the election returns shows that this is not the case. I invite you to look at the election returns for Fairfax County in 2004, when more people voted for John Kerry than for George W. Bush by a margin of 9,697 to 8,483. The idea that only sleazy Republican fat cats live in McLean's gated McMansions is thus no more than a crude generalization, for there are roughly an equal number of Democrat fat cats living there, too. The only question that remains is whether this article is just bad journalism or deliberately misleading propaganda.

JAMES D. PERRY
Reston, Virginia

MICHAEL CROWLEY RESPONDS:
James D. Perry's is a simplistic reading of my piece. I never argued that *no* Democrats live in McLean. I argued that McLean is a haven for Republican *elites*—a notion that numerous Republican elites, within McLean and elsewhere, fully endorsed.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN

WILLIAM J. STUNTZ ASSERTS, "Pain is largely about the gap between expectation and reality" ("Pain Principle," September 11 & 18). Really? Would Stuntz be pleased if all children in his family were born with intense chronic pain, so that they never felt the absence of a pain-free state and were forever immune to the "pain" he attributes to remembering life without pain? "Now, most things I do take every ounce of me," Stuntz says, also telling us that, previously, he didn't amply appreciate life's pleasures and didn't enjoy the satisfaction of doing the very best he could—chronic pain has given him those things. But, for many of us, even worse pain has



taken those away—devastating our lives, notwithstanding how resilient, resourceful, tough, determined we are; notwithstanding how much we appreciated life already; notwithstanding that we, too, could struggle mightily to function, if only our pain remained at the intensity that requires "every ounce" of Stuntz to accomplish most of what he does.

MARK HEADLEY
New York, New York

WILLIAM J. STUNTZ RESPONDS:
I'm sorry that my article offended Mark Headley. It sounds like he suffers more than I do, and my own pain is awful. My heart goes out to him. But I didn't say what he seems to think I said. Here is what I did say: Expecting the worst takes a little of the sting away when the worst comes. And small pleasures and accomplishments—things that once seemed too trivial to enjoy or too easy to trigger any pride—loom large to me now, because so much of what I once enjoyed in life has been taken from me. Those things are true, in my experience. That hardly means the pain—mine or anyone else's—isn't real and terrible.

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Much less that I'd be happy to bequeath it to my children—a particularly gruesome accusation, and one leveled without cause.

THE HOME FRONT

LEON WIESELTIER IS A TRULY WISE man, but he lapses with his cheap shot at those who believe "we have no right to make Iraq a better place until we make America a better place" ("Reinie and Woody," September 11 & 18). In the current war of words, there may be those, on the outskirts of reasonable opinion, who actually believe we cannot fight abroad until we have repealed the tax cut or provided universal health care; but what is Wieseltier doing in a skirmish like that? The real issue is not whether the United States should wait until it has become a perfect place before it fights a foreign war, but whether a president who strummed a guitar while New Orleans was beginning to drown has any hope of being a force for good in Baghdad. The character of a commander-in-chief matters when it comes to the invasion and rebuilding of a foreign nation, and, if that commander has shown contempt for his own nation's Constitution and its underprivileged citizens, what chance does the invaded nation stand? Domestic policy and those appointed to make it reflect the executive overseeing both, and, although Wieseltier cites the Jim Crow laws in force during World War II as proof that injustice at home can co-exist with the fight for justice abroad, it is no coincidence that the president who led the United States through World War II also guided his country through the Depression, establishing a social safety net that President Bush has tried so hard to undo. It is no coincidence that Reinhold Niebuhr's hero Abe Lincoln, whose leadership carried the United States through a civil war, also abolished slavery. Niebuhr, an interventionist in World War II who was also passionately committed to social justice at home, would surely have recognized that a ruler indifferent to the social fabric in the United States is a most dubious candidate to create order out of chaos a world away.

BARTH LANDOR
Chicago, Illinois

PREMATURE IRAQULATION

IN ONE STROKE, LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN gets to portray the press as hysterical

continued on page 37

"Not until *Circle in the Sand* has such a powerful light been thrown on the missing link in the chain of events that led from the first Gulf War to the second.
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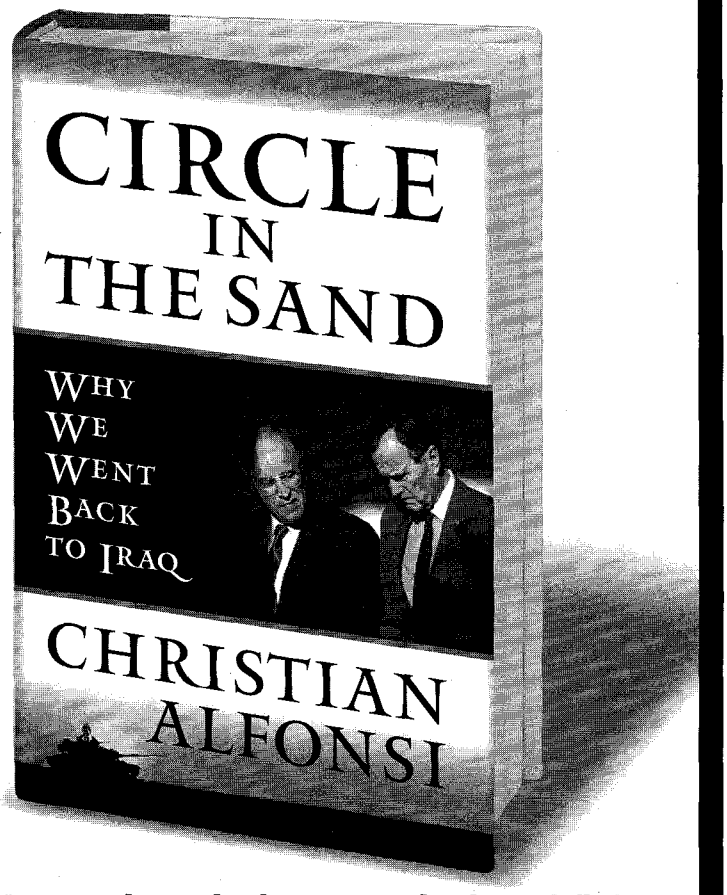

"Important, exhaustively researched, and fluidly written... Alfonsi argues, based on remarkable firsthand interviews with the participants, that the misguided invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven...by fear that Saddam Hussein might once again triumph over a Bush national security team."
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The Right Man

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

From Iraq to immigration to Mark Foley, conservatives can't agree on much these days. But on at least one point, they are rapidly reaching consensus: George W. Bush is an ideological fraud. Back in February, when Bruce Bartlett published *Imposter: How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy*, his argument was controversial. Today, it's practically conventional wisdom. In recent months, William F. Buckley has declared Bush a heretic, and George F. Will has implied the same. A couple of months ago, when right-wing graybeard Richard Viguerie published *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*, it barely even raised an eyebrow.

Rarely has so widespread a view been so wrong. In fact, Bush is not merely conservative; he is more conservative than Ronald Reagan, the man whose ideological legacy he has supposedly betrayed.

Start with economic policy, the greatest source of right-wing discontent. To listen to Bush's critics, you would think that discretionary, nonsecurity-related spending has exploded on his watch. But it hasn't. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has shown, when you take account of inflation and population growth, it grew a mere 2 percent between 2001 and 2006. And, as a percentage of GDP, it actually fell. What *has* exploded—rising 32 percent after inflation and population growth—is spending on defense, homeland security, and international affairs. And the people most responsible for those increases are conservatives themselves, who demanded an expansive war on terrorism.

To be sure, the cost of entitlements like Medicare and Social Security has also grown. And Bush has expanded Medicare by adding a prescription-drug benefit. But, even here, right-wingers don't give Bush his due. After all, one reason the program costs so much is that Bush insisted on delivering it through private companies, which can't deliver the benefits as cheaply, in order to partially privatize Medicare—long a conservative goal. And Bush gets little credit for his campaign to partially privatize Social Security, perhaps the most serious assault on the American welfare state ever.

Compare all this with Reagan. For starters, domestic, nondefense discretionary spending was higher, on average, under the Gipper. Reagan made no effort to privatize Social Security, even though its 1983 fiscal crisis offered him a golden opportunity. Instead, he raised the retirement age and raised taxes. In fact, while Bush followed his initial 2001 tax cut with three more, Reagan followed his large 1981 cut with tax *hikes* in 1982, 1983, and 1984. Today, conservatives remember Reagan as an anti-government crusader. But, at the time, many called him a coward. "Conservatives owned the executive branch for eight years," wrote David Frum in 1994. "And yet, every time they reached to undo the work of Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon—the work they had damned for nearly half a century—they felt the public's wary eyes upon them. They didn't dare."

On social issues, the story is similar. In *Conservatives Betrayed*, Viguerie slams Bush for nominating "the unqualified, near-unknown Harriet Miers for the Supreme Court." But Bush relented and has now appointed two Supreme Court justices whom the Christian right adores. By contrast, Reagan stuck by his 1981 nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor even after Jerry Falwell said that every good Christian should oppose her. Viguerie himself attacked Reagan for siding "with the liberal establishment," and his fears proved well-founded. Not only did O'Connor support abortion rights, but Reagan's third Supreme Court appointee, Anthony Kennedy, also voted to uphold *Roe* v. *Wade*.

In his entire time in office, Reagan never took a highly unpopular position on a high-profile issue to satisfy his Christian base, something Bush has done on embryonic stem-cell research. But, rather than showing Bush gratitude, conservative activists keep finding new reasons to kvetch. The latest is immigration, where Bush has been widely scorned for supposedly backing amnesty for illegal immigrants. Where on earth could he have gotten that idea? From Reagan, of course, who, in 1986, signed a bill granting amnesty to illegal immigrants who had lived in the United States continuously since 1982.

Then there is foreign policy, where some conservatives have decided that the Iraq war violates their creed. But it wasn't always that way. As *National Review*'s Romesh Ponnuru noted in June 2003, when Bush launched the Iraq war "almost everyone who considers himself a conservative did support it." In fact, Bush's foreign policy has proved more faithful to conservative principles than did Reagan's. When terrorists killed 3,000 Americans on September 11, Bush responded by invading two countries. When terrorists killed 241 American servicemen in Lebanon in October 1983, by contrast, Reagan promptly cut and ran. (The month before, when the Soviets shot down a South Korean airliner, killing 269 civilians, Reagan responded just as weakly: He did nothing.) And what about evil regimes? Bush shuns them. Reagan, by contrast, sold arms for hostages with Iran. And he placed so much faith in Mikhail Gorbachev that prominent conservative intellectuals called him a dupe. "Reagan," declared Will, "has accelerated the moral disarmament of the West by elevating wishful thinking to the status of political philosophy."

All of which raises a basic question. If conservatives were so angry with Reagan at the time, why do they worship him now? It's simple: Because his policies seemed to work.

And that's precisely why they are so scornful of Bush today. Think about it. Bush's second term has actually proved more conservative than his first. Since January 2005, he has nominated John Roberts and Samuel Alito, fought to privatize Social Security, and signed the two leanest budgets of his presidency—budgets in which domestic discretionary spending actually *drops* (when adjusted for inflation). And yet conservatives—who turned out for him in historic numbers just two years ago—now can't stand the guy.

Conservatives aren't turning on Bush because his policies aren't conservative. They are turning on him because his policies, from Iraq to Hurricane Katrina, have dramatically failed—and failed policies, by definition, cannot be conservative. Poor George W. Bush. His supporters fear the Democrats, but they fear cognitive dissonance far more. **PETER BEINART**

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Take This Job

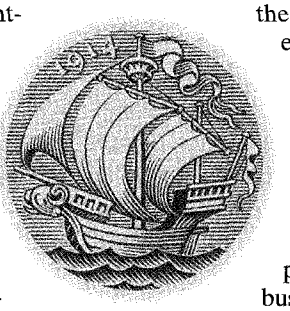
KEEPING LABOR ORGANIZERS at bay used to be a bloody business. In May 1937, when United Auto Workers leader Walter Reuther tried to unionize a Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, he was confronted by Henry Ford's hired goons. In the mêlée that ensued, the legendary labor organizer was slammed to the ground, kicked in the head, and tossed down multiple flights of stairs.

Today's business executives don't hire goons—and, thanks to George W. Bush, they don't need to. While every worker technically has the right to organize and join a union, not all can do so under the protection of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which sanctions government-supervised union elections and bars employer harassment. Denying certain workers these protections blocks them, in effect, from unionizing. And that is exactly what the NLRB—currently dominated by conservative Bush appointees—has done. For instance, the board has denied protection to certain temporary workers and subcontracted employees. Now the NLRB has handed business its biggest such victory yet: Earlier this month, it ruled that the nurses at a Michigan acute-care facility who set schedules for other nurses are not really employees but rather supervisors—which means they aren't protected by the NLRB. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that the decision could prevent as many as eight million workers in similar roles from joining unions. That would certainly please business leaders. But it should make the rest of us uneasy.

Professionals—such as the Michigan nurses—were a miniscule part of the U.S. workforce in 1937, when Reuther battled Ford in Dearborn. Today, they represent over one-fifth of all workers, and labor's survival in this country probably depends upon its growth in that sector. Many of these professionals occupy an ambiguous space in the workforce: Though they have little or no control over wages and workplace conditions, they still perform minor supervisory roles. Software programmers, for example, serve as team leaders; nurses have aides; and scientists rely on lab assistants.

Businesses are using this ambiguity to exploit an obscure 1947 amendment to the original National Labor Relations Act. The amendment, designed to prevent factory foremen from joining unions, denied supervisors NLRB protection to organize. Until recently, however, the NLRB still counted workers (including professionals) as employees rather than supervisors if they performed only rudimentary supervisory tasks. That was in keeping with the bill's original intent: The Senate's analysis of the amendment at the time distinguished *actual* supervisors from "straw bosses, leadmen, set-up men, and other minor supervisory employees." And the bill itself distinguished between the "independent judgment" of supervisors and the "discretion and judgment" exercised by professional employees.

The Rehnquist Court chipped away at these distinctions starting in 1994, but now the NLRB itself has left them in rubble. In this month's decision, the board ruled that "charge nurses"—who, as part of their duties, decide daily which patients other nurses will see—are supervisors, not employees. As the two Democrats on the NLRB noted in their dissent, the ruling ignores the fact that these "charge nurses" clearly functioned like "straw bosses" or "leadmen" rather than like foremen. They work with the employees they are said to supervise, and they lack the authority to discipline or reward these workers. The decision, the NLRB's Democrats wrote, "threatens to create a new class of workers under federal labor law: workers who have neither the genuine prerogatives of management, nor the statutory rights of ordinary employees." Such workers—who could include professionals like engineers, writers, editors, scientists, pharmacists, physicians, and social workers, as well as nonprofessionals like truck drivers, cooks, and construction workers—may soon find themselves stranded, along with charge nurses, in a gray area of the law.



That undoubtedly warms the hearts of Republicans everywhere. Labor's power may be on the wane, but unions are still the country's most organized advocates for social and economic equality—and a key counterweight to the political influence of big business. As Bush ally Grover Norquist explained in 2004, "Every worker who doesn't join the union is another worker who doesn't pay $500 a year to organized labor's political machine." No wonder Bush's NLRB appointees are so eager to strike blows against labor like the one they delivered this month. Think of it as the bureaucratic equivalent of being thrown down a flight of stairs. ■

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The SecDef cult.
Rummyache

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

NEOCONSERVATIVE DOYENNE MIDGE Decter was dining one night on a terrace overlooking Central Park with a friend—"a handsome, elegant, and well-connected member of the city's cultural and artistic community"—and the topic of Donald Rumsfeld came up. Decter recounts the way her dining companion suddenly melted: " 'Oh, *Rumsfeld*,' she practically cooed, 'I just *love* the man! To tell you the truth, I have his picture hanging in my dressing room.' "

As you can probably guess, this account is not a recent one. It comes from *Rumsfeld: A Personal Portrait*, Decter's 2003 love letter to the defense secretary. Alas, the years that have followed the publication of that tome have not been kind to its subject. As the war in Iraq has descended into quagmire, no one's reputation has plunged as deeply as Rumsfeld's. Every new account of the war that comes out—*Cobra II*, *Fiasco*, *State of Denial*—offers up a new stream of ghastly anecdotes: Rumsfeld refused to contemplate any postwar plan and intimidated his subordinates into silencing their qualms; he resisted providing necessary and available troops to keep order in the postwar period; he wouldn't acknowledge the insurgency until it was too late. Rumsfeld emerges as a figure of diabolical incompetence, a bungler of world-historic proportions. According to *Fiasco* author and *Washington Post* defense correspondent Thomas Ricks, Rumsfeld was responsible for "perhaps the worst war plan in American history." Even the defense secretary's natural allies have turned against him. "Rumsfeld and [General Tommy] Franks stifled the free exchange of ideas," wrote conservative columnist David Brooks. "They dismissed concerns about the insurgents and threatened to fire the one general, William Wallace, who dared to state the obvious in public." In *The Weekly Standard*, Frederick Kagan was even harsher, arguing that "in no previous American war has the chief of the military administration refused to focus on the war at hand."

State of Denial, Bob Woodward's latest, has delivered the coup de grâce. This scathing indictment, coming as it does from a pillar of Washington-establishment thinking and a former court stenographer of the Bush administration, represents the final indignity. The verdict now seems clear. The Iraq war is Rumsfeld's Folly. Future generations will use his name as a synonym for "Maginot," or perhaps "Hindenberg" or "Titanic."

In light of all this, it seems hard to believe that, just a few years ago, Rumsfeld was hailed as a visionary war leader. Among conservatives, in particular, he was treated to the sort of over-the-top hero worship that the right customarily bestows upon its standard bearers in flush political times. And so it seems as good a time as any to reexamine the wave of Rumsfeld hagiography that was in vogue for about two years following September 11, 2001. These documents offer a prime window into the pathologies of conservative thought in the Bush era. To be a loyal conservative during the last half-dozen years, you had to convince yourself to accept a series of propositions that ran the gamut from somewhat implausible to completely absurd. As those propositions collapse, one by one, conservatives are reacting much the same way as communists did following the fall of the Berlin Wall. There are the frantic efforts to rescue conservative orthodoxy by defining the party's leaders as apostates who deviated from the true faith. And there are the dazed true believers coming to grips with certain realities—Katherine Harris is a not a paragon of wisdom and fair-mindedness, after all; the administration's fiscal policies may not be completely sound; President Bush is not quite the visionary war leader we made him out to be; and so on. Only by revisiting the conservative propaganda in light of history's verdict can we see how delusional the movement had become. And on perhaps no topic were conservatives quite as delusional as on the leadership genius of Donald Rumsfeld.

DAVID COWLES

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TO PLUNGE BACK into the conservative idealization of Rumsfeld, given what we know today, is a bizarre experience. You enter an upside-down world in which the defense secretary is a thoughtful, fair-minded, eminently reasonable man who has been vindicated by history—and his critics utterly repudiated. The pioneering specimen of the genre was a *National Review* cover story from December 31, 2001, by Jay Nordlinger, cover-lined "THE STUD: DON RUMSFELD, AMERICA'S NEW PIN-UP," with a cartoon portraying the defense secretary as Betty Grable in her iconic World War II image. The central premise of the article was that Rumsfeld epitomized manliness and virility. (This turned out to be a recurring theme in the Rumsfeld iconography.)

Nordlinger's article consisted mostly of the sort of unprovable, impressionistic personal assessments that are the usual grist of the conservative character industry. As one Rumsfeld friend was quoted as saying, "People look for a different kind of person to run Washington—as far away from the Clinton type as you can get." (This was largely a continuation of a conservative theme that President Clinton had surrounded himself with wusses—"pear-shaped" men, as conservative author Gary Aldrich described them, or, as Bob Dole put it in his 1996 presidential nomination acceptance speech, "the elite who never grew up, never did anything real, never sacrificed.")

Nordlinger's cover story also featured a series of more specific descriptions of Rumsfeld that do not seem terribly prescient in light of subsequent events. For example, Nordlinger gushed that Rumsfeld "must be the most uneuphemistic person alive. He is totally immune, and allergic, to 'spin.'" This, of the man who would go on to describe the disintegration of order in postwar Iraq as "untidy" and portray hunger strikers in Guantánamo Bay as being on a "diet." Nordlinger's article also graciously noted that, despite their man being proven absolutely correct on absolutely everything, "Rumsfeld staffers take pains not to say 'I told you so.'" (Today, presumably, Rumsfeld's allies find it easier not to gloat.)

A recurrent theme among the Rumsfeld hagiographers was that their hero was a brilliant executive, arriving at the correct decision time and again through his peerless command of the bureaucratic process. This image was reflected in the 2002 bestseller *The Rumsfeld Way*. The author, Jeffrey Krames, has written a similar paean to iconic CEO Jack Welch, and his Rumsfeld book followed the conventions of executive porn, turning Rumsfeld's career into leadership dictums that can be applied to the corporate world. He was firm yet flexible, thorough yet decisive, ruthless yet moral, and so on. Each chapter concluded with a series of bullet-point takeaway lessons from Rumsfeld's career. Thus the reader learned that Rumsfeld's management style was governed by such principles as "Never underestimate the importance of listening," "Underpromise and overdeliver," "Decentralize," and "Avoid false forecasts."

This same awed deference to Rumsfeld's managerial genius is a primary theme in Decter's book. "[O]ne of Rumsfeld's special talents," she notes at one point, is creating "a process where everyone is learning and everyone is contributing." Tell that to Brigadier General Mark Scheid, who told the Newport News *Daily Press* that, in the run-up to the war, Rumsfeld threatened to fire the next subordinate who pestered him about the need to plan for a possible occupation.

When it was first published in 2003, Decter's ode to Rumsfeld was notable primarily for the schoolgirlish approach it took toward the author's sex appeal, replete with multiple cheesecake photos of a muscular young Rumsfeld in various athletic poses. Again, the contrast with Clinton was a central theme. "[T]here were few women and even fewer men who would with any sincerity have awarded Clinton the status of sex hero, let alone—O happy invention!—'studmuffin,'" she wrote at one point. "That designation would have to await the arrival of a high-achieving, clear-headed, earnest, no-nonsense, Midwestern family man nearly seventy years old." Here Decter had pioneered a new literary form: the foreign policy tract as *Teen Beat* mash note.

In retrospect, though, the quasi-salacious hero worship stands out less than Decter's wholehearted endorsement of Rumsfeld's hallucinatory worldview. In Decter's telling, Rumsfeld had the brilliant foresight to transform the military into a lighter, smaller force. ("[W]ho could honestly doubt the brilliance of the military plan [in Iraq]?" she asked, in what was at the time intended to be a rhetorical question.) Alas, as she explained, his masterful strategy aroused the envy of lesser minds around him. As she put it, "[t]hose whose resistance he had successfully put down would set out to exact their revenge by attacking his plan for the conduct of the approaching war in Iraq." For instance, she noted incredulously, "Ralph Peters complained that there were still not enough troops in Iraq to do what was necessary. They might have won the war handily ... but now there were not enough boots on the ground to establish the rule of law." Decter presented this objection as self-evidently wrong.

Decter's book was published in 2003, and most of it was likely written before the launch of the Iraq war. There was, however, a very short section toward the end where she dealt with the sobering months that followed the fall of Baghdad. This section was notable, because it suddenly ceased to mention Rumsfeld at all. Up until this moment in her story, Decter had portrayed the defense secretary as a virtuoso figure driving history through the sheer force of personality. In her section describing the failure of democracy to emerge in Iraq, by contrast, the protagonists became unnamed "policymakers" and "war planners." To wit, "it was also clear that the Americans would not be able to leave Iraq as quickly as certain policymakers seem to have expected," or, "In short, Iraq socially, politically and culturally was a mess whose depth neither the war planners nor the diplomats seemed to have reckoned on."

After this brief absence, though, Rumsfeld returned to

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the story in triumph. Decter concluded the book by gazing into the future:

> The popular 'discovery' of Donald H. Rumsfeld spells the return of the ideal of the Middle American family man. ... In the long run, this change may well be more important to the fortunes of his country than the changes he will have wrought in its armed forces.
>
> It seems certain that the picture of Rumsfeld hanging on the dressing-room wall of my fashionable dinner companion during that warm New York evening will not be taken down from there anytime soon.

Last week, I called Decter to see how she felt her analysis had held up over the past three years. I suggested that perhaps the generals calling for troops may have had a point. She demurred—"I don't know, I'm no expert"—betraying a humility conspicuously absent in the book. And what about the Manhattan friend with the Rumsfeld picture: Did she think it was still up on the wall? "Probably it is," she answered, "but I don't really know."

Anyone care to hazard a guess? ■

Gay GOP misery.

Crossfire

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

IN THE BARS and clubs frequented by Washington's gay men, a new character has recently cropped up: the hammered gay Republican. Until recently, says one gay Republican lobbyist, his counterparts on the Hill "had reached a point where you come to your work, you do a good job, you don't cause problems for your boss, and you go home." But then along came the Mark Foley scandal, with its right-wing anti-gay moralizing, liberal snickers about closeted hypocrisy, and a merciless wave of Internet gossip and "outings." The lobbyist says he assumes every gay Republican staffer is "terrified right now." And that has been enough to drive some of them to the bottle. One gay Washingtonian recalls running into an aide to a senior House Republican at a gay bar soon after FoleyGate broke: "He went out to get shitfaced, because he was so stressed out." Chris Crain, a blogger and former editor of the *Washington Blade*, a gay weekly in Washington, D.C., also says such encounters have become typical. "This weekend, I noticed that the gay Republicans I saw were notably more inebriated than usual. I think they were self-medicating—and I can't blame them."

Not at all. You'd probably drink hard, too, were you in such a socially and politically impossible position. For the dozens of gay Republicans on Capitol Hill—including senior aides to some of the most powerful and moralistic members of the House and Senate—the past few weeks have been a nightmare. On the right, gay Republicans face the likes of Tony Perkins and Pat Buchanan implying that the so-called "velvet mafia" enabled Foley's depredations and claiming linkage between pedophilia and homosexuality. On the left, meanwhile, are gay liberals furious over the Bush-era GOP's gay-baiting and increasingly willing to "out" the Republican regime's closeted enablers—with the help of their tell-all blogs. (Gay political circles have recently been abuzz with talk about "The List," a roster of allegedly gay GOP staffers that has circulated among political journalists and activists.) "These people feel under siege in their own party and also under siege in the gay community," says Crain. The Foley story will blow over eventually, but, given the de facto left-right alliance against them, gay Republicans might be knocking them back for a while to come.

NOT THAT GAY Republicans have ever had it easy, of course. For decades, they tended to be closeted entirely—some in the tragically warped model of Joseph McCarthy's henchman, Roy Cohn, who bashed deviants by day and slept with them at night. Or Terry Dolan, co-founder of the vituperative National Conservative Political Action Committee, who, like Cohn, died of AIDS. By the 1990s, gay Republicans had evolved into a defined party interest group, complete with their own lobbying arm in the Log Cabin Republicans. But the GOP establishment was slow to accept the change. In 1995, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole actually returned a $1,000 contribution to his campaign from the Log Cabin Republicans. During a debate over gay marriage the following year, then-Representative (and now Senator) Tom Coburn of Oklahoma seemed to speak for his party's religious-conservative wing when he said that homosexuality is "immoral ... based on perversion ... based on lust."

Even if conservatives never quite embraced the gay politicos within their ranks, however, they rarely turned the screws on them. Rather than eat their own, conservatives smeared Democrats, as when the GOP spread baseless rumors that then-Democratic House Speaker Tom Foley was gay. "We hear it's little boys," an aide to Newt Gingrich whispered to the New York *Daily News*. (Sorry, wrong Foley!) Instead, "outing" became the pastime of a gay left furious over the AIDS epidemic. One early victim was the closeted Wisconsin Republican Representative Steve Gunderson, whose voting record drew the AIDS activists' ire. At a bar one night in 1991, Gunderson was confronted by the activist Michael Petrelis, who furiously demanded, "When are you going to come out?" Petrelis then dumped a Coke on Gunderson before being dragged away. Under relentless pressure from other gay activists (and a few pile-ons from Republicans like Bob Dornan), Gunderson eventually outed himself. Likewise, Jim Kolbe, a gay representative from Arizona who is retiring this year, outed himself in 1996 to preempt the gay newsmagazine *Advocate* from doing it for him. And, when

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Arthur Finkelstein—a GOP consultant who produced savage ads for anti-gay candidates like Jesse Helms—was outed the same year, the deed was done by *Boston* magazine, hardly a right-wing outlet.

After a lull, the liberal outing machine sprang back into action a couple of years ago, as the Bush-DeLay GOP whipped its base into a frenzy over the specter of gay marriage. By then, the outing technology had surpassed dumping drinks on an offender's head; one gay activist with a blog could single-handedly out dozens of Republicans. That's just what a D.C.-based blogger named Michael Rogers began doing around the time of the 2004 congressional gay marriage debate. One early casualty was Virginia GOP Representative Ed Schrock, a rock-ribbed Navy veteran who had co-sponsored the Federal Marriage Amendment. Days after Rogers, working from his apartment in Washington's gay-friendly Adams Morgan neighborhood, posted messages allegedly recorded on a gay phone-sex line by the representative, Schrock retired. Rogers also targeted a slew of congressional staffers, including Robert Traynham, communications director to Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, who had bizarrely lumped gay marriage with "man-on-dog" sex. Santorum was ultimately forced to release a statement saying he stands by Traynham, whom he described as a target of partisan-based bigotry.

Rogers also zeroed in on a staffer for Oklahoma right-winger Jim Inhofe, who has said he does not hire openly gay or lesbian staffers and once declared himself "really proud" that his recorded family history included no gay relationships. But, as Rogers gleefully revealed, the staffer had posed for a fleshy photo spread in a local gay weekly in which he mused about finding a man with "six-pack abs you could eat chip and dip off of." (In response, Inhofe's office drew a distinction between the senator's personal staff and his committee staff, on which the man worked.) Another senior party operative, Rogers revealed, had posted an online personal ad declaring him to be "just looking for good sex, whether with one or several." Rogers and other gay media outlets had also chronicled Mark Foley's sexuality, a likely reason Foley never tried to run for Senate in Florida.

EVEN WITHOUT THE likes of Rogers, gay Republicans had been ostracized in Washington's mostly liberal gay community. "After the marriage amendment, that changed everything," a liberal gay activist explains. He recounts a recent night when a stranger began chatting up his friend in a bar. The ensuing conversation went something like this:

"Where do you work?"

"In the government."

"Where in the government?"

"In the Senate."

"Oh. Who do you work for?"

The answer came: a highly conservative senator who had championed the 2004 Federal Marriage Amendment. "You gotta be kidding me!" the activist snapped in disgust, breaking off the encounter.

Still, it's not likely that this poor scorned Republican is in danger of an outing. In the wake of the Foley scandal, even some gay Democratic partisans think it's best to ease up the public pressure on their GOP counterparts. "Politically, I think [outing] is a stupid idea right now," says John Aravosis, a prominent D.C.-based gay blogger who has supported outing in the past. "The Republicans are imploding—we don't need to draw attention to ourselves. And this story is already in enough danger of becoming a 'gay story.' We don't need to help it." Crain adds that, whatever frustrations gay liberals might have with their GOP counterparts, their cause benefits if senators like Santorum have regular contact with gays and lesbians—coming to know them as real people and not the perverted caricatures of James Dobson books.

But gay Republicans are hardly off the hook. In the private sphere, their lives are more perilous than ever. For pure vitriol, it would be hard to top an episode that occurred late last month at a Washington dinner party. The gathering included both well-connected Bush administration and congressional GOP staffers and several Democrats—all gay. Inevitably, politics came up. One Democrat in attendance, a former Clinton White House aide, couldn't contain his revulsion at the gay men working in the service of the enemy. "I ripped into this one guy" who works for the Bush administration, the Democrat says. "I said, 'What you do for a living is hurting me, and my family, and my daughter I have with two lesbians. I personally view Bush as the most corrupt, vile politician in the world, and if you're working for him, to me you're one and the same.' People were horrified." But, he adds, "I refuse to be cordial or friendly or polite to these people. I think they are our mortal enemy. They ask the gay community to indulge them when they want a social life, but when they punch the clock they are trying to tear apart our families. They want it both ways." Even a few weeks later, says another gay Washingtonian who was not present at the dinner, the former Clinton aide's "little screed is legendary."

And there are still lone liberal gunmen like Michael Rogers. His goal is to touch off an internal war within the GOP that ultimately brings down the party. He has vowed to out several more GOP staffers between now and Election Day, and says at least one influential conservative leader has cheered him on via e-mail. When I spoke to him this week, he boasted that he had just gotten off the phone with an official at a leading conservative organization, one of whose other senior officials he was about to out. "I think the Foley story ultimately brings to light the fact that the far right wing in America has been duped by the leadership of the GOP," he says, noting that he's communicated directly on the subject with some Christian conservative leaders. With bizarre bedfellows like that, you can't blame a gay Capitol Hill Republican for hitting the bars—and making it a double. ■

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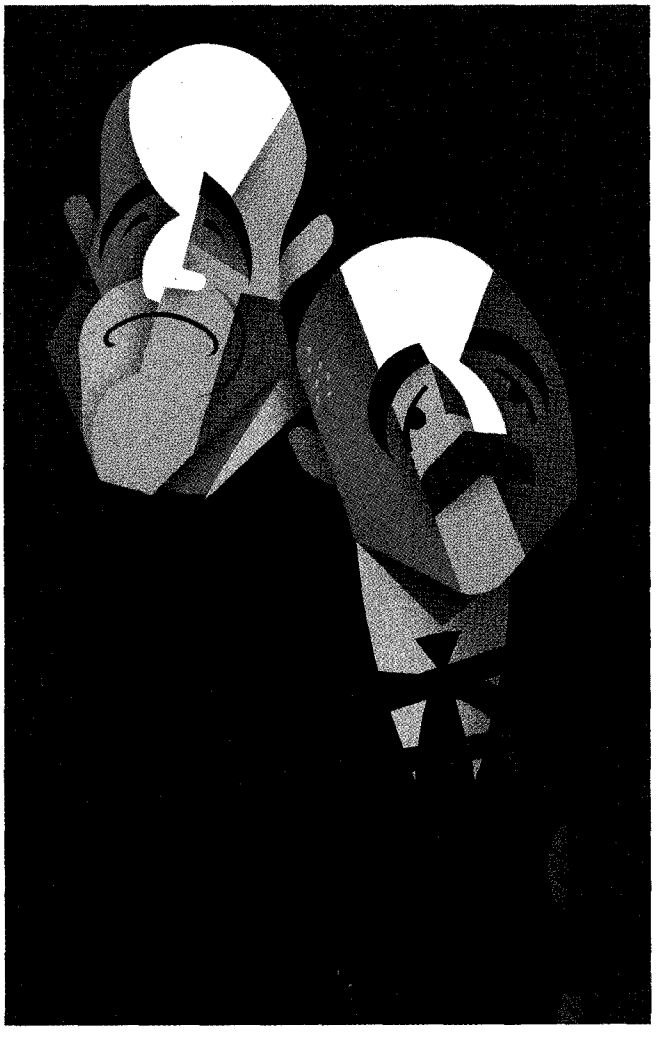
New York Postcard

Bad Cop

BY BEN SMITH

THE DITOMASSO BROTHERS may not have much in common with George W. Bush, but there's one thing the president and the mob-linked contractors share: Both have reason to rue the day they met Bernard B. Kerik.

In 2004, Bush nominated Mayor Rudy Giuliani's former police commissioner to head the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Within days, allegations surfaced that Kerik had faced arrest for unpaid bills, had close ties to some federal contractors, and had failed to pay taxes on his nanny. The nomination collapsed, calling the White House's judgment into question. In 1999, in what may have been an attempt to win city contracts, the DiTomasso brothers renovated Kerik's Bronx apartment for free. When a Bronx grand jury called the DiTomassos, they allegedly lied about it. "They were trying to protect him," says Leonard Levitt, whose *NYPD Confidential* website is the first stop for police gossip. "They're indicted. He goes free."



The annals of New York politics are full of nickel-and-dime schemes, venality, and outright stupidity, but Kerik's broad swath of damage is hard to match. The 51-year-old cop is not a backstabber—to the contrary, he's known for personal loyalty—but, in his long stumble down the corridors of Republican power, he has done a cartoonish mountain of damage, mostly to his friends and allies. Indictments (the DiTomassos, former aide Fred Patrick); ruined careers (former spokesman Tom Antenen); a love affair splashed across the tabloids (with publisher Judith Regan, at a city-owned apartment next to Ground Zero). Amid rumors of an investigation, his former chief of staff reportedly decamped to Brazil, where he apparently tried to sell a Kerik official windbreaker for $1,000 on eBay. "He's like Kryptonite," says Levitt. "Anybody he's had anything to do with comes away screwed and bitter."

But one Kerik friend remains unscathed: Giuliani. Kerik, in many ways, is a creation of the former New York City mayor, who helped him rise from the middle level of the police department to fame and notoriety. But, now that Giuliani is presumably making a run for the presidency in 2008, his friendship with the toxic Kerik may be his greatest liability. So far, Giuliani has managed to keep Kerik close while avoiding the kiss of death that has sunk so many of his former aide's other friends. But the latest Kerik scandal threatens to consign Giuliani to their same fate.

KERIK HAS BEEN with Giuliani since the beginning. According to Kerik's autobiography, *The Lost Son*, he admired Giuliani's 1989 mayoral campaign to restore law and order, having met the future mayor at an event honoring a slain police officer. Kerik was an NYPD detective—an aggressive tank of a man known as "Mustache" for his trademark facial hair. He volunteered to help in Giuliani's reelection campaign four years later, becoming the mayor's bodyguard and driver.

Kerik fit the mold Giuliani preferred: intensely loyal men from modest, white ethnic backgrounds like his own. After Giuliani's victory, Kerik took a high-ranking post in the Department of Corrections, despite his lack of management experience. He later ran that department and is thought to have done a good job. Then, in 2000, Giuliani picked Kerik to run his beloved NYPD.

Kerik has always been tough enough to pull himself up by his bootstraps but boneheaded enough to fall over his own feet. He grew up in inner-city Paterson, New Jersey, the son of an alcoholic prostitute who abandoned him when he was four. (She was later killed.) After dropping out of high school, he made his way into the Army and seemed to be

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DAVID COWLES

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rising in the ranks until another soldier insulted him. "He stuck his middle finger right in my face," Kerik wrote in his 2001 autobiography. "So I broke it."

Before long, Kerik was a street cop with a reputation for dedication and a willingness to break the rules. Those qualities followed him into city government. In one notorious episode as police commissioner, he violated city bidding procedures, spending $50,000 each on four security doors for police headquarters. They were put in storage after proving too heavy for the floor to support. But he also got headlines for going out and making busts himself—something he repeated in 2003, when Bush sent him to Iraq. His physical courage was never in doubt, and he was one of the iconic figures on September 11. When Giuliani left office in January of 2002, he took Kerik with him to head the security arm of his sprawling new firm, Giuliani Partners.

But, after the debacle of the Homeland Security appointment, Rudy did the politic thing and dumped his troublesome protégé. Kerik quietly resigned and set up his own security firm, conveniently located in the office of his criminal defense lawyer. Kerik, however, wasn't done bringing down his friends. In the summer of 2005, he took a call from Jeanine Pirro, the hapless Westchester district attorney who had dropped out of the U.S. Senate race to run for New York attorney general. Pirro suspected her troublesome husband, Al, of having an affair (yet another), this time with one Lisa Santangelo. She asked Kerik to bug Al's boat. "We can just simply say, if there is an issue, that I am redecorating it for our anniversary," Pirro said.

Kerik demurred: "But Jeanine, I'm having the same fucking problem with everybody. Everybody is panic stricken because it's you. I've gone out on a limb. I had two other people looking at this."

"What am I supposed to do, Bernie?" Pirro asked. "Watch him fuck her every night? ... I'll put the fucking thing on myself."

We have this exchange, of course, because Bronx prosecutors, interested in the DiTomasso's undisclosed renovations on Kerik's apartment, tapped Kerik's phone. On September 27, 2006, half an hour after WNBC aired news of the leaked transcript, Pirro appeared at a press conference so rattled that she left her wad of chewing gum stuck to the inside of the podium. The Kerik Kryptonite had struck again, diminishing Pirro's already slim chances of becoming attorney general and prompting a new federal investigation—this time, into her.

THE PIRRO SCANDAL shows signs of coming full circle back to Kerik's mentor, Giuliani. Kerik's first call after his conversation with Pirro was reportedly to Giuliani Partners. *The Daily News* has reported that prosecutors have expressed interest in one current and one former employee of a Giuliani Partners subsidiary for their roles in the Pirro case—and that one has

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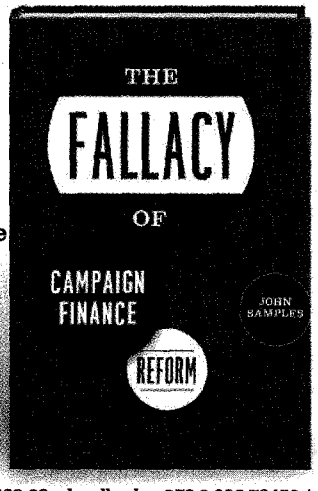

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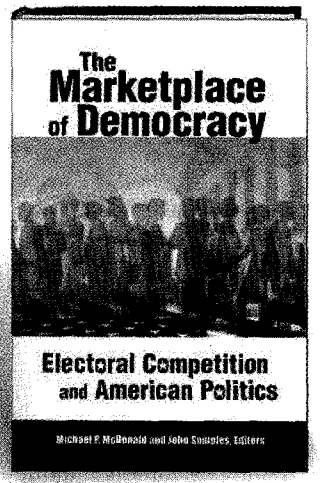

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already been subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury. And the as-yet-unleaked reams of Bronx wiretap have fueled endless speculation about what Giuliani may have said. "You've got to believe he's on those wiretaps," speculates Doug Muzzio, a professor of public affairs at the City University of New York. "This is not good for business, and it's not good for his presidential race."

People around Giuliani say they don't know what the damage will be. "It depends on what's on those tapes," says one former aide. Giuliani's spokeswoman, Sunny Mindel, declined to comment on whether Giuliani called Kerik in 2005, when prosecutors were reportedly listening in.

But, despite the fact that Kerik may drag Giuliani's name into the seamy world of illegal wiretaps and mafia-linked contractors, it's still unlikely Giuliani will cast him out. Giuliani's attachment to his former driver reveals what has always been a defining quality about the likely presidential contender: Giuliani expects deep loyalty, and returns it to his aides and their families with little attention to their qualifications. Despite Kerik's symbolic expulsion from Giuliani Partners after the DHS fiasco, Giuliani has never repudiated his former bodyguard. That's not how things work within his tight, intensely loyal inner circle.

On September 11, Giuliani hosts an annual dinner, a blend of reunion and memorial for his City Hall circle. This year it was at Frank's, a steakhouse in the meatpacking district, and two people who were there were mildly surprised to see the hulking shoulders and trademark mustache. Kerik, who had pled guilty to misdemeanor charges for accepting the free renovations two months earlier, wasn't doing much talking. He was "on an island amid a sea of people," said one guest. But he was there. When I expressed surprise to Giuliani insiders that the tarnished Kerik had been invited to that September 11 dinner, they just shrugged. Kerik, one said, is "part of the family." ■

Did Yale plunder Peru?

Bonesmen

BY CHRISTOPHER HEANEY

On July 24, 1911, a 35-year-old Yale lecturer named Hiram Bingham followed an eight-year-old boy into the Peruvian jungle. As director of the Yale Peruvian expedition of 1911, Bingham was looking for Vitcos, one of the last Incan capitals sacked by the Spanish in 1572; the boy, whose family lived and planted crops among Incan ruins, was his guide. Bingham—six-foot-four, handsome, and dressed in a hunting jacket and crumpled gray fedora—followed the child over cascading terraces and into a cave framed by sacred steps and a sinuous hourglass of cut stone. Above, a beautiful curving tower scraped the overcast sky. Beyond it was a clearing bound on two sides by temples, on the third by a view of a snow-capped peak, and on the fourth by the ridge that lent these ruins its name: Machu Picchu. The grandest of the temples had three walls of beautiful, cyclopean white granite and sat at an angle to an unfinished temple with three perfect trapezoidal windows.

Bingham knew that Machu Picchu was too close to Cuzco, the center of the Incan empire, and thus was not Vitcos. The romance of the ruins, however, struck him to the core. He spent five hours excitedly taking pictures of the Incas' ceremonial baths and vine-draped royal residences, of their spectacular mountain views, and of the boy next to a carved stone column—or *Intihuatana*—that had once been the Incas' hitching post for the sun, their god. He noted in his journal that a Peruvian had "discovered" the ruins in 1902, but Bingham was determined to return. "Would anyone believe what I had found?" he recalls himself musing, almost 40 years later, in his classic account of the expedition, *The Lost City of the Incas*.

The question was a masterful literary concoction. As Bingham well knew, everyone would believe his story. Bingham and his Yale expedition had come to Peru in the waning light of a golden age of American exploration, and, perhaps just as importantly, in the dawn of America's imperial century, when the country's soldiers, diplomats, businessmen, and scientists spilled into Latin America. What Bingham did next, on a subsequent expedition to Machu Picchu, was emblematic of that age: He unearthed thousands of artifacts—ranging from necklaces and bracelets to broken and delicate terra-cotta instruments and human remains—and shipped them back to the United States, to the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University. Today, these artifacts make up the only intact collection from an Incan royal estate that escaped the torches of Spanish conquest.

But the descendants of the Americas' largest pre-Columbian empire now want those artifacts back. A year ago, the government of Peru announced that it was prepared to sue Yale in court for the return of the "lost treasure" of Machu Picchu. Yale refused to return the collection, claiming it rightfully belonged to the university, although it did offer the compromise of returning some artifacts and funding a museum for their display. Peru rejected the offer and has yet to follow through with its threatened lawsuit, but, if it does, it will be in sensational company. This year, several countries have charged world-famous Western museums with illegitimately possessing native artifacts. In February, Italy successfully forced the Metropolitan Museum of Art to acknowledge that the Euphronios Krater was looted, and it prosecuted a former J. Paul Getty Museum director for accepting smuggled artifacts. That same month, Egypt's antiquities chief threatened the St. Louis Art Museum with legal action if it did not

Christopher Heaney is a writer and Fulbright Fellow to Peru.

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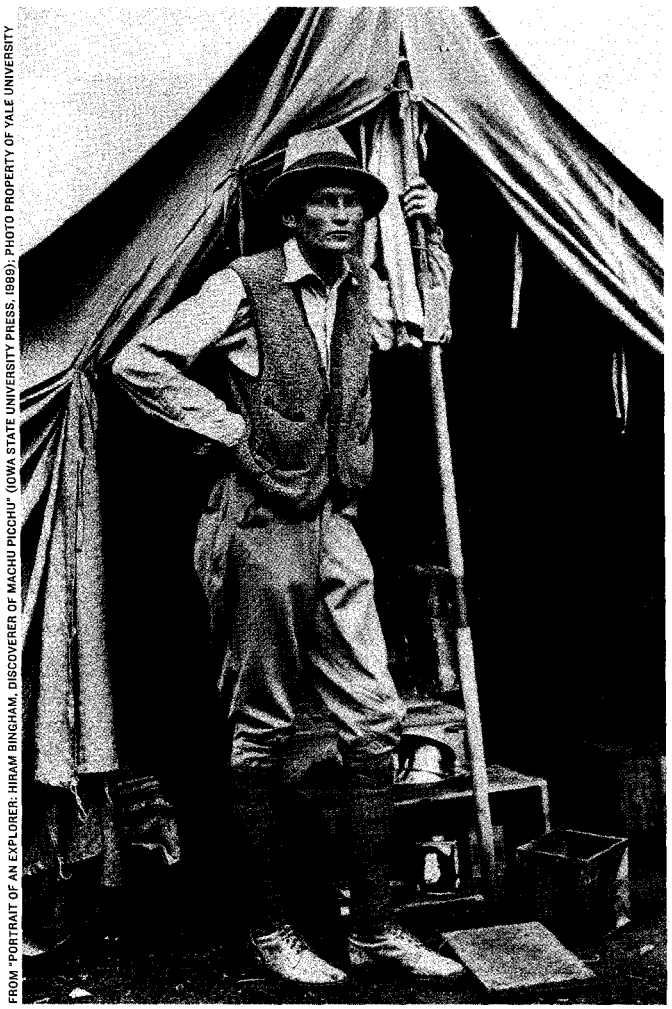

FROM "PORTRAIT OF AN EXPLORER: HIRAM BINGHAM, DISCOVERER OF MACHU PICCHU" (IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1989); PHOTO PROPERTY OF YALE UNIVERSITY

Hiram Bingham III near Machu Picchu, 1912.

return a purportedly stolen 3,200-year-old mummy mask. In July, Greece also won the return of artifacts from the Getty, and, in September, a German university took the unprecedented step of returning a small piece of a Parthenon frieze. (The British Museum continues to stonewall Greek attempts to retrieve the larger Elgin marbles.)

Although modern laws distinguish between artifacts collected 150 years ago and those pulled from the soil last week, these challenges correspond with a twenty-first-century surge of nationalism and anti-globalization sentiment. Smaller countries, once pawns in the imperial games of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are aggressively reasserting their rights to their own heritage and culture, as embodied by these artifacts. This burst of cultural protectionism has forced premier museums of the world, seemingly apolitical institutions, to defend the acquisition of some of their finest antiquities. This political subtext is particularly keen in Peru, where the national pride in—and anger over Yale's possession of—the treasures of Machu Picchu accompanies a larger anti-American leftist sentiment.

But at the heart of Yale and Peru's argument are the antiquities themselves and how they became the property of Yale. Were they legally exported for their own protection, or were some smuggled out in a spirit of greed? And was Yale ever legally bound to return these lost treasures to Peru? An investigation into letters, journals, official papers—from Yale's own Manuscripts & Archives Collection, the National Archives, and the National Geographic Society—and numerous government and private archives in Peru reveals that the answers lie in the actions of one man: Hiram Bingham, the romantic, ambitious, but flawed explorer who, in many ways, became a proxy for American imperialism itself.

In 1912, National Geographic Society President Gilbert H. Grosvenor sent Bingham back to Machu Picchu with the hope that "you will be able to excavate and bring back a shipload of antiquities for your museum at Yale." But the explorer had a problem. During the excitement of the first Yale expedition, Peru's intellectuals, including a passionate and nationalistic young Peruvian scholar named Luis E. Valcárcel, began to hound the government to protect the treasures of pre-Columbian ruins from foreign exportation. In 1911, just weeks after Bingham first arrived at Machu Picchu, a group named the Society to Protect Historical Monuments pushed the Peruvian president into decreeing that any artifacts found through scientific excavation belonged to the state, and, most importantly, that the exportation of antiquities, "whatever their class or condition," was prohibited.

Bingham wrongly derided these protections as local jealousy and intellectual posturing. But his proprietary feeling toward the artifacts was also rooted in the American exceptionalism of Bingham's time and personal history. Hiram Bingham III was born in Hawaii, in 1875, to a famous family of missionaries. He grew up in the shadow of his grandfather, the deceased Reverend Hiram Bingham I, who brought Protestant Christianity to the islands in the 1820s, leading to its later U.S. political and economic dominance. Bingham moved to the mainland for prep school and earned his B.A. from Yale in 1898, a month and a half after the United States declared war on Spain and intervened in Cuba's fight for independence. According to a profile of Bingham from the 1920s, his uncle talked him out of joining Colonel Theodore Roosevelt's voluntary cavalry of "Rough Riders." Just as the September 11 attacks showed the necessity of Middle Eastern Studies in the twenty-first century, the Spanish-American War suggested the need for Latin Americanists in the early twentieth. By September 1901, when Roosevelt was sworn in as America's new president, Bingham had married an heiress to the Tiffany jewelry fortune and was pursuing a Harvard Ph.D. in South American history.

In 1907, Yale President Arthur Hadley brought Bingham back to his alma mater as a lecturer. "It is the first opportunity, so far as I know, in any American University, implying the authority to teach the History and Geography of South America as a specialty," Bingham wrote to his father. His appointment came in the shadow of Roosevelt's Corollary

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to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the right of the United States to intervene in Latin America; Bingham's classes, which prepared students for careers in Latin American business and diplomacy, initially reflected this khaki-clad sentiment. One final exam asked students to rate South American countries from excellent to poor based on their "opportunities for (a) a Mining Engineer. (b) a Soldier of Fortune. (c) a Capitalist. (d) an average Yale graduate with good health and a capital of $5,000."

But Bingham wasn't simply a Teddy Roosevelt–era nationalist. He was also a restless romantic who saw himself as following in the benevolent tradition of explorers and his missionary ancestors. Bingham studied South America with his feet: After earning his Ph.D., he struck out for Colombia to trace the march of the revolutionary Simón Bolívar into the swamps of Venezuela. By 1909, Bingham's conversations with South Americans had led him to rethink America's jingoist leanings, and, after a Pan-American Scientific Congress in Santiago, Chile, Bingham decided that the Roosevelt Corollary was not only an unnecessary blow to South American sovereignty but also to America's image and interests abroad.

This realization intensified Bingham's evolution from academic to explorer—to understand Latin America today, Bingham reasoned, the United States should understand the golden, and idealized, pre-Columbian civilizations of the past. After visiting Chile and tracing colonial trade routes through Bolivia—running into Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid's gang on the way—Bingham visited his first ruins, Choqquequirau, or "cradle of gold." Although he doubted its popular identification as the Incas' last capital, the glimpse of undocumented Incan sites in the Andes was tantalizing and sparked one of the twentieth century's most breathtaking sprints of exploration. By 1911, Bingham had raised enough money to return to the Andes with his first Yale expedition, and, on July 24, with the help of Peru's president, business community, intellectuals, and landowners, he reached Machu Picchu. In the weeks following, he visited a number of other sites, including Vitcos, which he identified through a great white rock shrine nearby, the ghostly Yurak Rumi.

It was Machu Picchu, however, that made him famous. Although archaeologists and historians have shown how Bingham's identification of the site as the cradle and grave of the Incas was a fanciful distortion of facts, its revelation in 1911 seemed a lightning bolt to Western attitudes about pre-European accomplishment. Bingham believed it paramount to bring the lost treasures to the United States—not only to burnish his reputation, but also, as he sincerely believed, for the protection of the artifacts and the monuments. It was no secret that the antiquity-rich South American nation had problems guarding its archaeological past. The Peruvians who brought him to Choqquequirau, for example, searched for treasure with dynamite. Peru had passed laws and decrees protecting monuments and antiquities since Peruvian independence, but, for lack of resources, enforced them arbitrarily, if at all.

So, after learning of the Peruvian government's decree, Bingham met with American President (and fellow Yalie) William H. Taft, who asked American consular officials to help negotiate a concession that would make Yale the only licensed archaeological excavator in Peru for a decade. That summer, Bingham and Yale excavators—now funded by the National Geographic Society—burned Machu Picchu to clear the vegetation, then mapped and excavated the white granite city. The work was well underway when Peru's parliament, intellectual community, and press caught wind of the deal and exploded with indignation. Yale's excavations halted to await a Peruvian monitor. A November 4, 1912, letter to a Cuzco newspaper captured the furor, declaring that anyone who wanted to study the riches of Peru ought to come to the country itself and leave their dollars there, for it would be the ultimate insult if Peruvians ever had to go to North America to study what used to be in Peru.

The concession was scrapped, but pressure from Peru's wealthiest British investor got Bingham a decree allowing, "as an exception and only this once," for the export of Machu Picchu's graceful ceramics, silver finery, and nearly 5,000 other artifacts, as well as human remains. It was a victory subject to Peru's goodwill, however. A clause in the agreement reserved Peru "the right to exact from the University ... the return of the unique and duplicate objects it has extracted."

Back at home, the press and scientific community alike celebrated Bingham's successful delivery of the Machu Picchu artifacts to Yale. When *National Geographic* magazine devoted its entire April 1913 edition to Yale's 1912 return to Machu Picchu, *The New York Times* called it "the Greatest Archaeological Discovery of the Age." For his efforts, Bingham sat at National Geographic Society banquets between Robert Peary (who, with Matthew Henson, reached the North Pole in 1909) and the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, who reached the South Pole in December 1911, six months after Bingham reached Machu Picchu.

As Yale's celebrity explorer and the nation's foremost expert on Peru, Bingham took the opportunity to assault American interventionism in Latin America in *The Atlantic Monthly*. "THE MONROE DOCTRINE: AN OBSOLETE SHIBBOLETH" made him a household name to many who had yet to hear of Machu Picchu. Bingham's fame finally gave him a brush with the age's other spirit of exploration and expansion: Theodore Roosevelt. In 1913, while touring South America after his defeat in the 1912 presidential election, Roosevelt responded to Bingham's criticisms of his interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine by lecturing against "another type of well-meaning but singularly short-sighted American"—"often a man of learning, a college graduate, or even a college professor"—who "attacks the Monroe Doctrine ... [as] an 'outworn policy.'"

Bingham was at the height of his fame and planning his third Yale expedition to Peru when, in April 1914, he sat down to write a letter to the director of Peru's National Library. In it, he claimed that he would send "separate pieces" from Machu Picchu back to Peru now that studies were

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completed. But, despite his promise, Bingham never did. In the letter, he also chided the Peruvian government for interfering in his projects:

> Confidence ought to be shown in [foreign] excavators until they show that they do not merit confidence, then they ought not to be allowed to operate. It is extremely unpleasant, and leads to many difficulties to have a government representative constantly on watch like a spy. ... [A]rchaeologists ought to be men of honor like other people, and to a man of honor it is extremely painful to be spied upon. If he cannot be trusted, he ought not to be allowed to work in the country.

It was a strangely self-righteous note to be sounding a mere 24 hours after Bingham had done something that would surely have made his Peruvian hosts—had they known about it—realize he couldn't be trusted.

BINGHAM'S TEMPTATION CAME in the form of a letter from a Peruvian antiquarian and landowner named T.A. Alvistur, who offered to sell him his collection of 366 Incan antiquities for £2,200. The catch, however, was that, in order to get the artifacts on a U.S.-bound ship, Bingham would have to pay a "great sum to allow the collection to leave, for, as you know, the exportation of ancient objects is prohibited." Bingham did know, of course, but he also knew the value of Alvistur's collection from his 1912 visit to Cuzco. Although it lacked the breadth of the 5,000-piece trove that Bingham had brought back to Yale from Machu Picchu in 1912, it was far finer—handpicked by the collector in Cuzco from objects found by farmers in the nearby Inca valleys. If Alvistur bribed Peruvian customs, Yale could have a valuable, untraceable, and permanent collection. The day before he wrote his letter to the director of Peru's national library, Bingham made a counteroffer of £1,500 (about $145,000 today): "I realize that the material is worth more than this, and I wish I could pay more," he apologized, "but this is as much as I can possibly offer you."

It was enough for Alvistur, who personally shepherded the collection's 366 pieces past customs and onto a ship bound for New York. While Bingham paid almost entirely out of his family's deep pockets, he intended the artifacts for Yale's Peabody Museum. When the deal was over, Bingham thanked the shipping agent for helping make "Yale an efficient place in which to learn about Peru ancient and modern."

Did Bingham believe he was heroically intervening to rescue Peruvian artifacts? Or was he, like some modern curators, prey to the competitive pressure to build a collection for the folks back home? Either way, from then on, Bingham grew disingenuous about his excavations in Peru. In mid-July 1914, while Bingham was still in New Haven deemphasizing the archaeological nature of his team's work to the Peruvian government, the third Yale expedition made notable finds at a site known as Inca Churisca, or Frozen Inca. They included a bronze breast plate, broken silver, bronze suns, and, apparently, the only gold ever found by the Yale expeditions: a small "circle, marked and pierced." The Inca Churisca materials are listed today in the Yale Peabody Museum's online catalogue of anthropological materials. But the director of Peru's National Museum never registered any gold, or anything from Inca Churisca, in his 1916 inventory of the expedition's collection. Already suspicious of Yale, he would have noted such unique items.

A clue to how the finds may have reached Yale, without the permission or knowledge of the Peruvian authorities, lies in expedition records: In September of 1914, two months after the incredible find, two of the expeditions' members returned to the United States and "sent 17 envelopes and packages to [Hiram Bingham] by Dr. Meserve."

But Bingham was playing a dangerous game under the increasingly watchful eyes of Peru's own scientific community. The explorer's Inspector Javert turned out to be Valcárcel, the young Peruvian scholar who had been among the intellectuals inspired to protect Incan ruins after Bingham's first expedition. The 24-year-old Valcárcel had since founded Cuzco's Historical Institute and was keeping a close eye on excavations in the area. In March 1915, Bingham arrived in Peru. His trip started promisingly enough. In April and May, he mapped the now-famous Inca Trail leading to Machu Picchu ("I ... nearly wept to see how [the site] had gone back to jungle and brush," he wrote to his wife), then went to Vitcos—the Inca capital that he had found after Machu Picchu—and oversaw excavation of the site. Five days later, Bingham arrived in Ollantaytambo, where he was greeted by the young Dr. Valcárcel—birdlike and intense in his small round glasses—and three members of Cuzco's Historical Institute (one a rumored descendant of the Incas). They confronted Bingham with accusations collected from local *campesinos* and recorded by Valcárcel in indignant shorthand in his little yellow diary: that the Yale expedition had been illegally excavating and damaging ruins; that it had secretly found a tunic of gold in Machu Picchu and golden chalices, rings, and mummies filled with gold elsewhere; and that all had been hidden in boxes to be smuggled out through Bolivia.

The expedition *had* failed to apply for an excavation permit from Peru's Educational Ministry, but the other accusations were sensationally incorrect—Yale had not excavated at Machu Picchu since 1912, it had not found anything so spectacular anywhere else, and nothing was sent out through Bolivia—and, for that reason, impossible to prove. Nevertheless, Valcárcel and the Historical Institute published their accusations in local and national newspapers, and the Peruvian government stepped in with an investigation. Valcárcel's Historical Institute brought formal charges against the expedition in Peru's court, Bingham wrote. Two months later, he fled the country.

But he was not through yet. While waiting in Lima in August for his steamer to Panama—and, from there, to New York—Bingham paid for another "interesting lot of Peruvian antiquities ... provided the owner would ship them out

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of the country." The owner had them consigned to a fictitious character, one "J.P. Simmons, New York."

All told, Bingham spent $25,000 of his own resources (at least $480,000 today) on items for Yale. But the artifacts did not relieve Bingham's wounded pride. By the time that the final shipment reached New Haven in 1916, he had quit exploration entirely and was abandoning his conviction that Peru and South America deserved respect and understanding. As he wrote in 1916 to a friend who helped the legal exportation of the 1914–1915 artifacts: "I cannot help wishing (as I presume you do) that we had never attempted to bring this stuff out.... I hope I may never have to go back to Peru."

Fueled by anger, in May 1916, Bingham took the train out to Oyster Bay, New York, rode up to the house of his former adversary, Theodore Roosevelt, and pushed through a crowd of Republicans. "Colonel Roosevelt, I want to tell you how frankly I stand," said Bingham. "When I was in Peru, as a representative of the National Geographic Society, I found much that didn't please me. I found that the claim to American citizenship won no respect. We were often accused of stealing gold there, and our statement that we were members of the National Geographic Society was no claim to consideration. They did not have a very high opinion of Americans there. So I decided that there were pleasanter occupations for an American citizen than exploring in Peru, and I came home."

"The other delegates cheered this frank utterance," *The New York Times* reported, "and the Colonel clapped his hands vigorously. 'Good for you!' he said. 'I can't tell you how much it pleases me to hear you talk like that.' " Bingham was too old for war, but, with Roosevelt's encouragement, he organized a battalion of Yale students raring to intervene in the Mexican Revolution. By 1920, Bingham had publicly reevaluated his criticism of the Monroe Doctrine and believed that the United States did need an intervening hand in the region after all.

By 1924, Bingham's ambition, charisma, and willingness to toe the Republican line won him a seat in the U.S. senate. His flair undiminished at age 50, he became America's "Flying Senator" when he landed a zeppelin on the steps of the Capitol. But he also courted controversy—supporting U.S. intervention in Nicaragua—and was censured for putting a lobbyist on Senate payrolls. He died in 1956, but not before serving as a Communist-hunting head of the Loyalty Review Board during the Red Scare.

A HALF-CENTURY AFTER Bingham's death, on May 9, 2006, over 1,200 residents of Machu Picchu Pueblo left the shadow of the famous ruins and rode the train to Cuzco. In what may have been history's first public protest over a collection of antiquities, the tourism-dependent residents marched with signs and banners to the city's main plaza, calling for the return of Machu Picchu artifacts that Bingham had brought to Yale. "We feel that our roots are in these archaeological remains," says Machu Picchu Mayor Oscar Valencia Auca, who claims that marches in Lima and the United States are being planned. "The world should admire these pieces in their home."

Over the years, the government of Peru tried to repatriate the Incan antiquities. Although the officially collected and legally exported artifacts and bones from the 1914–1915 expedition belonged, through an agreement, not to Yale but to the Peruvian government, when Peru first asked for their return in 1918 Bingham was directing the Allies' largest air training base in France, and Yale won an extension. In 1920, Peru's consul in the United States asked again, this time citing the clause in the 1912 agreement that guaranteed the return of the Machu Picchu artifacts. Bingham ignored the reference, and, instead, in 1921, the Peabody Museum sent back "forty seven cases of human skeletal remains from the Highlands of Peru."

It's only recently, however, as Peru seeks its national identity in the pre-Spanish past, and the United States loses Latin American favor, that the lost treasures of Machu Picchu have become a popular political issue. Peru's current claim against Yale began after Alejandro Toledo's election as president in 2001. Hailed as the first indigenous president in Peruvian history, Toledo held a second, symbolic inauguration at Machu Picchu. His wife, an anthropologist, helped spearhead the claim against Yale. The Yale–Machu Picchu story also factored into recent presidential elections. On June 4, Alan Garcia, a center-left former president, beat Ollanta Humala, a strident populist à la Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, with about 55 percent of the vote. Beforehand, says Mayor Valencia Auca, the town contacted the candidates for their commitment to fight for Machu Picchu's artifacts. In letters read in Cuzco a few days before the election, both candidates pledged to retrieve patrimony abroad.

But there's a very good chance that Yale can't legally be forced to return the Machu Picchu artifacts. The reason is a loophole of sorts: As explained by Yale's lawyer in Peru, Enrique Ghersi, neither the 1911 decree that prohibited the exportation of antiquities nor the 1912 decree that provided for the future return of the Machu Picchu artifacts has legal weight. The basis of the decrees, Ghersi argues, was an 1893 decree that had been quietly voided in 1903. Therefore, the artifacts excavated in 1912 by the Yale Peruvian Expeditions belonged to Yale under a still extant 1852 civil code. As for the allegations of Bingham's smuggling, Yale Public Affairs officer Helaine Klasky rejected the correspondence between Bingham and the collectors as evidence of wrongdoing. But if, as Yale contends, the 1911 prohibition on exportation was legally baseless, then the collections that Bingham paid to be exported weren't "smuggled" anyway.

Recent international law between the United States and Peru also supports Yale's claim. As Dr. Richard Burger, the Peabody's curator of anthropology and co-curator of Yale's Machu Picchu exhibition, explained by e-mail, Peru's bilateral agreement with the United States on antiquities "recognizes the impossibility of disentangling these historical cases

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and only applies to antiquities that entered the [United States] after 1981." He also noted, "Private collections were widely bought, sold, and exported early in the twentieth century, and museums in Europe and the USA are full of them."

There is some small hope, however, for Peru. Before being approached for this article, Yale claimed that the artifacts Bingham excavated in 1914–1915 had been returned, as agreed upon with Peru. When presented with the information that the one recorded repatriation to date consisted solely of skeletal remains, however—and that the Yale Peabody Online Catalogue lists at least a thousand artifacts that only could have been excavated in 1914–1915—Klasky said, "We believe that Bingham intended to return all the materials he committed to return," a sharp contrast to assertions that all antiquities from 1914–1915 had been returned. Klasky also says that the current inventory of the Peruvian expeditions' artifacts "has many problems and is currently under review."

Although Yale is optimistic that the new Peruvian government will continue discussions rather than take the matter to court, the previous administration's claims have already won the support of the National Geographic Society. After a review of the Society's documentation, says Terry Garcia, National Geographic vice president for mission programs, he had "no question" that the artifacts from Machu Picchu belonged to Peru. "[The Peruvians are] not saying that Yale did a bad job in preserving and conserving these things," continues Garcia. "But they are saying, 'Look, you agreed that you were going to return these. It's time.' "

Bingham's story is as complex as the legacy of imperialism it represents. Like many Americans abroad, Bingham legitimately started out with the belief that he was doing something good, that he was helping a culture that could not help itself. But, in the end, he sabotaged the very history and self-determination he wished to restore and, in the process, tarnished his own (and Yale's) reputation. Today's cynicism toward Bingham and Yale—like much current Latin American suspicion today of U.S. intentions—was best captured by one Argentinean. "Here's the tragedy," wrote 23-year-old Ernesto Guevara in 1953, a few years shy of becoming "Che," "All of the ruins were cleaned of vegetation, perfectly studied and described and ... totally robbed of every object that fell in the hands of the investigators, who triumphantly carried to their country more than two hundred boxes containing invaluable archaeological treasures. ... Bingham is not the culprit, objectively speaking, nor are the North Americans, in general, guilty, nor is a government economically prevented from making an expedition like that of the discoverer of Machu-Picchu guilty. There is no one then? We accept this, but where can we admire or study the treasures of this indigenous city? The answer is obvious: in the museums of North America." ■

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Against the myth of American innocence.

Cowboy Nation

BY ROBERT KAGAN

THESE DAYS, WE are having a national debate over the direction of foreign policy. Beyond the obvious difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a broader sense that our nation has gone astray. We have become too militaristic, too idealistic, too arrogant; we have become an "empire." Much of the world views us as dangerous. In response, many call for the United States to return to its foreign policy traditions, as if that would provide the answer.

What exactly are those traditions? One tradition is this kind of debate, which we've been having ever since the birth of the nation, when Patrick Henry accused supporters of the Constitution of conspiring to turn the young republic into a "great and mighty empire." Today, we are mightier than Henry could have ever imagined. Yet we prefer to see ourselves in modest terms—as a reluctant hegemon, a status quo power that seeks only ordered stability in the international arena. James Schlesinger captured this perspective several years ago, when he said that Americans have "been thrust into a position of lonely preeminence." The United States, he added, is "a most unusual, not to say odd, country to serve as international leader." If, at times, we venture forth and embroil ourselves in the affairs of others, it is either because we have been attacked or because of the emergence of some dangerous revolutionary force—German Nazism, Japanese imperialism, Soviet communism, radical Islamism. Americans do not choose war; war is thrust upon us. As a recent presidential candidate put it, "The United States of America never goes to war because we want to; we only go to war because we have to. That is the standard of our nation."

But that self-image, with its yearning for some imagined lost innocence, is based on myth. Far from the modest republic that history books often portray, the early United States was an expansionist power from the moment the first pilgrim set foot on the continent; and it did not stop expanding—territorially, commercially, culturally, and geopolitically—over the next four centuries. The United States has never been a status quo power; it has always been a revolutionary one, consistently expanding its participation and influence in the world in ever-widening arcs. The impulse to involve ourselves in the affairs of others is neither a modern phenomenon nor a deviation from the American spirit. It is embedded in the American DNA.

Robert Kagan is the author of DANGEROUS NATION: AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD FROM ITS EARLIEST DAYS TO THE DAWN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

LONG BEFORE THE country's founding, British colonists were busy driving the Native American population off millions of acres of land and almost out of existence. From the 1740s through the 1820s, and then in another burst in the 1840s, Americans expanded relentlessly westward from the Alleghenies to the Ohio Valley and on past the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, southward into Mexico and Florida, and northward toward Canada—eventually pushing off the continent not only Indians, but the great empires of France, Spain, and Russia as well. (The United Kingdom alone barely managed to defend its foothold in North America.) This often violent territorial expansion was directed not by redneck "Jacksonians" but by eastern gentlemen expansionists like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams.

It would have been extraordinary had early Americans amassed all this territory and power without really wishing for it. But they did wish for it. With 20 years of peace, Washington predicted in his valedictory, the United States would acquire the power to "bid defiance, in a just cause, to any earthly power whatsoever." Jefferson foresaw a vast "empire of liberty" spreading west, north, and south across the continent. Hamilton believed the United States would, "erelong, assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies—majestic, efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it." John Quincy Adams considered the United States "destined by God and nature to be the most populous and powerful people ever combined under one social compact." And Americans' aspirations only grew in intensity over the decades, as national power and influence increased. In the 1850s, William Seward predicted that the United States would become the world's dominant power, "the greatest of existing states, greater than any that has ever existed." A century later, Dean Acheson, present at the creation of a U.S.-dominated world order, would describe the United States as "the locomotive at the head of mankind" and the rest of the world as "the caboose." More recently, Bill Clinton labeled the United States "the world's indispensable nation."

From the beginning, others have seen Americans not as a people who sought ordered stability but as persistent disturbers of the status quo. As the ancient Corinthians said of the Athenians, they were "incapable of either living a quiet life themselves or of allowing anyone else to do so." Nineteenth-century Americans were, in the words of French diplomats, "numerous," "warlike," and an "enemy to be feared." In 1817, John Quincy Adams reported from London, "The universal feeling of Europe in witnessing the

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gigantic growth of our population and power is that we shall, if united, become a very dangerous member of the society of nations." The United States was dangerous not only because it was expansionist, but also because its liberal republicanism threatened the established conservative order of that era. Austria's Prince Metternich rightly feared what would happen to the "moral force" of Europe's conservative monarchies when "this flood of evil doctrines" was married to the military, economic, and political power Americans seemed destined to acquire.

What Metternich understood, and what others would learn, was that the United States was a nation with almost boundless ambition and a potent sense of national honor, for which it was willing to go to war. It exhibited the kind of spiritedness, and even fierceness, in defense of home, hearth, and belief that the ancient Greeks called *thumos*. It was an uncommonly impatient nation, often dissatisfied with the way things were, almost always convinced of the possibility of beneficial change and of its own role as a catalyst. It was also a nation with a strong martial tradition. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans loved peace, but they also believed in the potentially salutary effects of war. "No man in the nation desires peace more than I," Henry Clay declared before the war with Great Britain in 1812. "But I prefer the troubled ocean of war, demanded by the honor and independence of the country, with all its calamities, and desolations, to the tranquil, putrescent pool of ignominious peace." Decades later, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., the famed jurist who had fought—and been wounded three times—in the Civil War, observed, "War, when you are at it, is horrible and dull. It is only when time has passed that you see that its message was divine."

Modern Americans don't talk this way anymore, but it is not obvious that we are very different in our attitudes toward war. Our martial tradition has remained remarkably durable, especially when compared with most other democracies in the post–World War II era. From 1989 to 2003, a 14-year period spanning three very different presidencies, the United States deployed large numbers of combat troops or engaged in extended campaigns of aerial bombing and missile attacks on nine different occasions: in Panama (1989), Somalia (1992), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995–1996), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (1991, 1998, 2003). That is an average of one significant military intervention every 19 months—a greater frequency than at any time in our history. Americans stand almost alone in believing in the utility and even necessity of war as a means of obtaining justice. Surveys commissioned by the German Marshall Fund consistently show that 80 percent of Americans agree with the proposition that "[u]nder some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice." In France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, less than one-third of the population agrees.

How do we reconcile the gap between our preferred self-image and this historical reality? With difficulty. We are, and have always been, uncomfortable with our power, our ambition, and our willingness to use force to achieve our objectives. What the historian Gordon Wood has called our deeply rooted "republicanism" has always made us suspicious of power, even our own. Our enlightenment liberalism, with its belief in universal rights and self-determination, makes us uncomfortable using our influence, even in what we regard as a good cause, to deprive others of their freedom of action. Our religious conscience makes us look disapprovingly on ambition—both personal and national. Our modern democratic worldview conceives of "honor" as something antiquated and undemocratic. These misgivings rarely stop us from pursuing our goals, any more than our suspicion of wealth stops us from trying to accumulate it. But they do make us reluctant to see ourselves as others see us. Instead, we construct more comforting narratives of our past. Or we create some idealized foreign policy against which to measure our present behavior. We hope that we can either return to the policies of that imagined past or approximate some imagined ideal to recapture our innocence. It is easier than facing the hard truth: America's expansiveness, intrusiveness, and tendency toward political, economic, and strategic dominance are not some aberration from our true nature. That *is* our nature.

WHY ARE WE this way? In many respects, we share characteristics common to all peoples through history. Like others, Americans have sought power to achieve prosperity, independence, and security as well as less tangible goals. As American power increased, so, too, did American ambitions, both noble and venal. Growing power changes nations, just as it changes people. It changes their perceptions of the world and their place in it. It increases their sense of entitlement and reduces their tolerance for obstacles that stand in their way. Power also increases ambition. When Americans acquired the unimaginably vast territory of Louisiana at the dawn of the nineteenth century, doubling the size of their young nation with lands that would take decades to settle, they did not rest content but immediately looked for still more territory beyond their new borders. As one foreign diplomat observed, "Since the Americans have acquired Louisiana, they appear unable to bear any barriers round them."

But, in addition to the common human tendency to seek greater power and influence over one's surroundings, Americans have been driven outward into the world by something else: the potent, revolutionary ideology of liberalism that they adopted at the nation's birth. Indeed, it is probably liberalism, more than any other factor, that has made the United States so energetic, expansive, and intrusive over the course of its history.

Liberalism fueled the prodigious territorial and commercial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that made the United States, first, the dominant power in North America and, then, a world power. It did so by elevating the rights of the individual over the state—by declaring that all people had a right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness and by insisting it was the

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government's primary job to safeguard those rights. American political leaders had little choice but to permit, and sometimes support, territorial and commercial claims made by their citizens, even when those claims encroached on the lands or waters of foreigners. Other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century governments, ruled by absolute monarchs, permitted national expansion when it served personal or dynastic interests—and, like Napoleon in the New World, blocked it when it did not. When the king of England tried to curtail the territorial and commercial expansionism of his Anglo-American subjects, they rebelled and established a government that would not hold them back. In this respect, the most important foreign policy statement in U.S. history was not George Washington's farewell address or the Monroe Doctrine but the Declaration of Independence and the enlightenment ideals it placed at the heart of American nationhood. Putting those ideals into practice was a radical new departure in government, and it inevitably produced a new kind of foreign policy.

Liberalism not only drove territorial and commercial expansion; it also provided an overarching ideological justification for such expansion. By expanding territorially, commercially, politically, and culturally, Americans believed that they were bringing both modern civilization and the "blessings of liberty" to whichever nations they touched in their search for opportunity. As Jefferson told one Indian leader: "We desire above all things, brother, to instruct you in whatever we know ourselves. We wish to learn you all our arts and to make you wise and wealthy." In one form or another, Americans have been making that offer of instruction to peoples around the world ever since.

Americans, from the beginning, measured the world exclusively according to the assumptions of liberalism. These included, above all, a belief in what the Declaration of Independence called the "self-evident" universality of certain basic truths—not only that all men were created equal and endowed by God with inalienable rights, but also that the only legitimate and just governments were those that derived their powers "from the consent of the governed." According to the Declaration, "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it." Such a worldview does not admit the possibility of alternative truths. Americans, over the centuries, accepted the existence of cultural distinctions that influenced other peoples to rule themselves differently. But they never really accepted the legitimacy of despotic governments, no matter how deeply rooted in culture. As a result, they viewed them as transitory. And so, wherever Americans looked in the world, they saw the possibility and the desirability of change.

The notion of progress is a central tenet of liberalism. More than any other people, Americans have taken a progressive view of history, evaluating other nations according to where they stood on the continuum of progress. The Russians, Theodore Roosevelt believed, were "below the Germans just as the Germans are below us ... [but] we are all treading the same path, some faster, some slower." If Roosevelt's language sounds antiquated, our modern perspective is scarcely different. Although we may disagree among ourselves about the pace of progress, almost all Americans believe that it is both inevitable and desirable. We generally agree on the need to assist other nations in their political and economic development. But development toward what, if not toward the liberal democratic ideal that defines our nationalism? The "great struggle of the epoch," Madison declared in the 1820s, is "between liberty and despotism." Because the rights of man were written "by the hand of the divinity itself," as Hamilton put it, that struggle could ultimately have only one outcome.

It was a short step from that conviction to the belief that the interests of the United States were practically indistinguishable from the interests of the world. "The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind," Thomas Paine argued at the time of the revolution. Herman Melville would later write that, for Americans, "national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we cannot do a good to America but we give alms to the world." It was another short step to the belief that the United States had a special, even unique, role to play in serving as a catalyst for the evolution of mankind. "The rights asserted by our forefathers were not peculiar to themselves," Seward declared, "they were the common rights of mankind." Therefore, he said, the United States had a duty "to renovate the condition of mankind" and lead the way to "the universal restoration of power to the governed" everywhere in the world. Decades earlier, John Quincy Adams had noted with pride that the United States was the source of ideas that made "the throne of every European monarch rock under him as with the throes of an earthquake." Praising the American Revolution, he exhorted "every individual among the sceptered lords of mankind: 'Go thou and do likewise!' "

A Russian minister, appalled at this "appeal to the nations of Europe to rise against their Governments," noted the hypocrisy of Adams's message, asking, "How about your two million black slaves?" Indeed. The same United States that called for global revolution on behalf of freedom was, throughout its first eight decades, also the world's great defender of racial despotism. The slaveholding South was itself a brutal tyranny, almost totalitarian in its efforts to control the speech and personal behavior of whites as well as blacks. Much of the U.S. territorial expansion in the nineteenth century—including the Mexican War, which garnered today's American Southwest and California—was driven by slaveholders, insisting on new lands to which they could spread their despotic system.

In the end, the violent abolition of slavery in the United States was a defining moment in the country's foreign policy: It strengthened the American tendency toward liberal moralism in foreign affairs. The Northern struggle against slavery, culminating in the Civil War, was America's first

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moral crusade. The military defeat of the Southern slaveholders was America's first war of ideological conquest. And what followed was America's first attempt at occupation and democratic nation-building (with the same mixed results as later efforts). The effect of the whole struggle was to intensify the American dedication to the universality of rights and to reaffirm the Declaration of Independence, rather than the Constitution with its tacit acceptance of slavery, as the central document of American nationhood. The Civil War fixed in the American mind, or at least in the Northern mind, the idea of the just war—a battle, fought for moral reasons, whose objectives can be achieved only through military action.

Such thinking led to the Spanish-American War of 1898. One of the most popular wars in U.S. history, it enjoyed the support of both political parties, of William Jennings Bryan and Andrew Carnegie, of eastern Brahmin Republicans like Henry Cabot Lodge, radical prairie populists, and labor leaders. Although one would not know it from reading most histories today, the war was motivated primarily by humanitarian concerns. Civil strife in Cuba and the brutal policies of the Spanish government—in particular the herding of the civilian population into "reconcentration" camps—had caused some 300,000 deaths, one-fifth of Cuba's population. Most of the victims were women, children, and the elderly. Lodge and many others argued that the United States had a responsibility to defend the Cuban people against Spanish oppression precisely because it had the power to do so. "Here we stand motionless, a great and powerful country not six hours away from these scenes of useless bloodshed and destruction," he said, imploring that, if the United States "stands for humanity and civilization, we should exercise every influence of our great country to put a stop to that war which is now raging in Cuba and give to that island once more peace, liberty, and independence." The overwhelming majority of the nation agreed. The U.S. intervention put an end to that suffering and saved untold thousands of lives. When John Hay called it a "splendid little war," it was not because of the smashing military victory—Hay was no militarist. It was the lofty purposes and accomplishments of the war that were splendid.

It was also true that the United States had self-interested reasons for going to war: commercial interests in Cuba, as well as the desire to remove Spain from the hemisphere and establish our preeminence in the region. Most of Europe condemned the United States as selfish and aggressive, failing to credit it with humanitarian impulses. Moreover, the war produced some unintended and, for many who idealistically supported it, disillusioning consequences. It led to the acquisition of the Philippines and a most unsplendid war against independence-minded Filipinos. It also produced a well-intentioned, but ultimately disappointing, multiyear occupation of Cuba that would haunt Americans for another century. And it reignited an old debate over the course of U.S. foreign policy—similar to the one that consumes us today.

NOW, AS THEN, the projection of U.S. power for liberal purposes faces its share of domestic criticism—warnings against arrogance, hubris, excessive idealism, and "imperialism." Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, conservatives in the republican tradition of Patrick Henry worried about the effect at home of expansive policies abroad. They predicted, correctly, that a big foreign policy generally meant a big federal government, which—in their eyes—meant impingements on the rights and freedoms of the individual. The conservatives of the slaveholding South were the great realists of the nineteenth century. They opposed moralism, rightly fearing it would be turned against the institution of slavery. As Jefferson Davis put it, "We are not engaged in a Quixotic fight for the rights of man. Our struggle is for inherited rights. ... We are conservative." At the end of the century, when Americans were enthusiastically pushing across the Pacific, critics like Grover Cleveland's long-forgotten secretary of state, Walter Q. Gresham, warned that "[e]very nation, and especially every strong nation, must sometimes be conscious of an impulse to rush into difficulties that do not concern it, except in a highly imaginary way. To restrain the indulgence of such a propensity is not only the part of wisdom, but a duty we owe to the world as an example of the strength, the moderation, and the beneficence of popular government."

But, just as progressivism and big government have generally triumphed in domestic affairs, so, too, has the liberal approach to the world beyond our shores. Henry failed to defeat the Constitution. Southern realism lost to Northern idealism. The critics of liberal foreign policy—whether conservative, realist, or leftist—have rarely managed to steer the United States on a different course.

The result has been some accomplishments of great historical importance—the defeat of German Nazism, Japanese imperialism, and Soviet communism—as well as some notable failures and disappointments. But it was not as if the successes were the product of a good America and the failures the product of a bad America. They were all the product of the same America. The achievements, as well as the disappointments, derived from the very qualities that often make us queasy: our willingness to accumulate and use power; our ambition and sense of honor; our spiritedness in defense of both our interests and our principles; our dissatisfaction with the status quo; our belief in the possibility of change. And, throughout, whether succeeding or failing, we have remained a "dangerous" nation in many senses—dangerous to tyrannies, dangerous to those who do not want our particular brand of liberalism, dangerous to those who fear our martial spirit and our *thumos*, dangerous to those, including Americans, who would prefer an international order not built around a dominant and often domineering United States.

Whether a different kind of international system or a different kind of America would be preferable is a debate worth having. But let us have this debate about our future without illusions about our past. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Enthroned

THE FIRST TIME I SAW HELEN Mirren, she was in the nude. In *Age of Consent* (1969), she flitted out of the woods and across an Australian beach and plunged into the sea. The last time I saw her—or very nearly the last—she was wearing brogues, thick stockings, and a tweed skirt, and was scrambling after two dogs in a Scottish field. In the intervening thirty-seven years of her career, she has been busy heaping up astonishments.

THE QUEEN
(Miramax)

Born in England in 1945, she got her first professional engagement in the London theater in 1965 with virtually no training, and before very long she was playing Lady Macbeth for the Royal Shakespeare Company. By 1972, after she had made several films, including *O Lucky Man!* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, she joined Peter Brook's experimental theater group, playing in African villages. Back she came to resume stage and screen work. Among the numerous films she has made, not all of them distinguished, are *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Cal*, *The Madness of King George*, and *Gosford Park*. One striking aspect of her whole career has been its combination of caloric sexuality and serious talent. In many of her pictures she has been sexually active, and in all of her pictures we have been aware of a woman who had more in her than the ability to take her clothes off.

All of the above is germane to her new film, because in theme and tone, nothing in the past predicts THE QUEEN, in which Mirren plays Elizabeth II. (She did Elizabeth I on television recently, but I can't comment on it because decades ago I swore off any further performances of this near-perennial role.) Whatever the virtues of *The Queen*—and it certainly has them—it simply would not exist without Mirren. Her achievement is all the more extraordinary when we remember the twisty difficulties involved. How could an actress perform such a famous figure without mere mimicry? Yet the very public person had to be recognizable. Even more pressingly, in order to avoid a charade, a character had to be realized. Mirren's subtlest triumph is her divining, with instinct and imagination, the empathies and antipathies, the reactions and restraints, with which to fulfill the work. Not many of this film's viewers will be able to comment on the authenticity of bedroom conversations in Buckingham Palace or Balmoral, but not many will doubt them, either. Mirren authenticates as she goes.

I looked up a couple of English reviews to see if there was any criticism of the writing of this only partly documented role. (It is impossible that all of Elizabeth's scenes could have come from documented sources.) Not one adverse word on the subject. I scented only a kind of pride that a monarch who had never seemed widely popular or colorful had been made a film star.

The screenplay is by Peter Morgan, who has a way with dialogue (assuming that some of it is his own): the queen says she wishes that she could vote so that she could know "the joy of being partial." The story comes from the only event in this queen's life that could possibly have made a film: the controversy over the funeral rites for Princess Diana in 1997. The entire drama is in the changing of Elizabeth's reluctance to mourn, largely because of Tony Blair's persistence. It is well known that Diana and Elizabeth were not close—Diana herself had mentioned it—and that the queen was not overwhelmed with grief by the ugly accident. Her coolness had been further chilled by the (eventual) dallying that Diana had done. This reaction seems a bit askew, since Prince Charles had a mistress before and during his marriage—she is referred to here, only once, as "the other woman"—and we do not know the queen's feelings about that woman, who is now Charles's second wife. The screenplay lets us assume that Elizabeth, besides accepting traditional male prerogatives, had a mother's animosity toward her son's exquisite wife.

The typhoon of public grief after the accident and the floral swathing of Buckingham Palace have not yet, to my knowledge, been explicated helpfully by a sociologist. At that moment, however, it was politically important, for the monarchy's stability, that the queen leave Balmoral in Scotland and come down to London to mourn. (In one of the script's less light-handed moments, she is more moved by the shooting of a beautiful stag on the moors than by Diana's death.) One of Mirren's accomplishments is to keep our sympathy for a woman who is so unaffected by the death of her grandchildren's mother, whatever the matrimonial pother.

Elizabeth responds to Tony Blair's pleas that she return. (How much of Blair's dialogue did he supply or verify? All very strange, this quasi-verity.) He is a Labour leader, and it is mentioned that Labour PM's have always been dotty about the monarch. Indeed, toward the end, when Blair and staff are watching HM on television and one of the group makes a snide remark, Blair responds furiously that this woman has given her life to service of her country. He omits that she has been pretty well recompensed in innumerable ways.

Stephen Frears, whose directing of *My Beautiful Launderette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* showed early on that he has a sharp eye for social strata, seemingly gets great pleasure out of recreating this unique society. He and Morgan may have slipped with the Queen Mother—was she really just a gin-soaked old bag?—and sometimes he lets movie music intrude. But generally our eyes and ears are happy.

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James Cromwell is aptly ineffectual as Prince Philip; Alex Jennings is nondescript as Prince Charles. Helen McCrory as Mrs. Blair is juicily anti-monarchy as she teases hubby. The most important second role is, of course, Blair, played by Michael Sheen, who previously played Blair in a Morgan-Frears television film. Sheen has Blair's essential verve of a juvenile in an English comedy—now naturally aging a bit—but anyone who has seen television broadcasts of Blair on his feet in the House of Commons on Question Day knows that he is an adroit parliamentarian. Any suggestion of this quality is not in Sheen.

After a last deep bow to Mirren, a closing note of admiration—not irrelevant because the subject is germane to this picture's world. The (upper-class) men's clothes. What tailoring, what tweeds. One reason to be glad that this film is fascinating is that it makes this comment possible. ■

Thomas Nagel
The Fear of Religion

THE GOD DELUSION
By Richard Dawkins
(Houghton Mifflin, 352 pp., $26)

RICHARD DAWKINS, THE most prominent and accomplished scientific writer of our time, is convinced that religion is the enemy of science. Not just fundamentalist or fanatical or extremist religion, but all religion that admits faith as a ground of belief and asserts the existence of God. In his new book, he attacks religion with all the weapons at his disposal, and as a result the book is a very uneven collection of scriptural ridicule, amateur philosophy, historical and contemporary horror stories, anthropological speculations, and cosmological scientific argument. Dawkins wants both to dissuade believers and to embolden atheists.

Since Dawkins is operating mostly outside the range of his scientific expertise, it is not surprising that *The God Delusion* lacks the superb instructive lucidity of his books on evolutionary theory, such as *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, and *Climbing Mount Improbable*. In this new book I found that kind of pleasure only in the brief explanation of why the moth flies into the candle flame—an example introduced to illustrate how a useful trait can have disastrous side effects. (Dawkins believes the prevalence of religion among human beings is a side effect of the useful trust of childhood.)

One of Dawkins's aims is to overturn the convention of respect toward religion that belongs to the etiquette of modern civilization. He does this by persistently violating the convention, and being as offensive as possible, and pointing with gleeful outrage at absurd or destructive religious beliefs and practices. This kind of thing was done more entertainingly by H. L. Mencken (whom Dawkins quotes with admiration), but the taboo against open atheistic scorn seems to have become even more powerful since Mencken's day. Dawkins's unmitigated hostility and quotable insults—"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction"—will certainly serve to attract attention, but they are not what make the book interesting.

The important message is a theoretical one, about the reach of a certain kind of scientific explanation. At the core of the book, in a chapter titled "Why There Almost Certainly Is No God," Dawkins sets out with care his position on a question of which the importance cannot be exaggerated: the question of what explains the existence and character of the astounding natural order we can observe in the universe we inhabit. On one side is what he calls "the God Hypothesis," namely that "there exists a superhuman, supernatural intelligence who deliberately designed and created the universe and everything in it, including us." On the other side is Dawkins's alternative view: "any creative intelligence, of sufficient complexity to design anything, comes into existence only as the end product of an extended process of gradual evolution. Creative intelligences, being evolved, necessarily arrive late in the universe, and therefore cannot be responsible for designing it." In Dawkins's view, the ultimate explanation of everything, including evolution, may be found in the laws of physics, which explain the laws of chemistry, which explain the existence and the functioning of the self-replicating molecules that underlie the biological process of genetic mutation and natural selection.

THIS PAIR OF STARK ALTERnatives may not exhaust the possibilities, but it poses the fundamental question clearly. In this central argument of Dawkins's book, the topic is not institutional religion or revealed religion, based on scripture, miracles, or the personal experience of God's presence. It is what used to be called "natural religion," or reflection on the question of the existence and nature of God using only the resources of ordinary human reasoning. This is not the source of most religious belief, but it is important nonetheless.

In a previous chapter, Dawkins dismisses, with contemptuous flippancy the traditional a priori arguments for the existence of God offered by Aquinas and Anselm. I found these attempts at philosophy, along with those in a later chapter on religion and ethics, particularly weak; Dawkins seems to have felt obliged to include them for the sake of completeness. But his real concern is with the argument from design, because there the conflict between religious belief and atheism takes the form of a scientific disagreement—a disagreement over the most plausible explanation of the observable evidence. He argues that contemporary science gives us decisive reason to reject the argument from design, and to regard the existence of God as overwhelmingly improbable.

The argument from design is deceptively simple. If we found a watch lying on a deserted heath (William Paley's famous example from the eighteenth century), we would conclude that such an intricate mechanism, whose parts fit together to carry out a specific function, did not come into existence by chance, but that it was created by a designer

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with that function in mind. Similarly, if we observe any living organism, or one of its parts, such as the eye or the wing or the red blood cell, we have reason to conclude that its much greater physical complexity, precisely suited to carry out specific functions, could not have come into existence by chance, but must have been created by a designer.

The two inferences seem analogous, but they are very different. First, we know how watches are manufactured, and we can go to a watch factory and see it done. But the inference to creation by God is an inference to something that we have not observed and presumably never could observe. Second, the designer and the manufacturer of a watch are human beings with bodies, using physical tools to mold and put together its parts. The supernatural being whose work is inferred by the argument from design for the existence of God is not supposed to be a physical organism inside the world, but someone who creates or acts on the natural world while not being a part of it.

The first difference is not an objection to the argument. Scientific inference to the best explanation of what we can observe often leads to the discovery of things that are themselves unobservable by perception and detectable only by their effects. In this sense, God might be no more and no less observable than an electron or the Big Bang. But the second difference is more troubling, since it is not clear that we can understand the idea of purposive causation—of design—by a non-physical being on analogy with our understanding of purposive causation by a physical being such as a watchmaker. Somehow the observation of the remarkable structure and function of organisms is supposed to lead us to infer as their cause a disembodied intentional agency of a kind totally unlike any that we have ever seen in operation.

Still, even this difference need not be fatal to the theistic argument, since science often concludes that what we observe is to be explained by causes that are not only unobservable, but totally different from anything that has ever been observed, and very difficult to grasp intuitively. To be sure, the hypothesis of a divine creator is not yet a scientific theory with testable consequences independent of the observations on which it is based. And the purposes of such a creator remain obscure, given what we know about the world. But a defender of the argument from design could say that the evidence supports an intentional cause, and that it is hardly surprising that God, the bodiless designer, while to some extent describable theoretically and detectable by his effects, is resistant to full intuitive understanding.

DAWKINS'S REPLY TO THE ARgument has two parts, one positive and one negative. The positive part consists in describing a third alternative, different from both chance and design, as the explanation of biological complexity. He agrees that the eye, for example, could not have come into existence by chance, but the theory of evolution by natural selection is capable of explaining its existence as due neither to chance nor to design. The negative part of the argument asserts that the hypothesis of design by God is useless as an alternative to the hypothesis of chance, because it just pushes the problem back one step. In other words: who made God? "A designer God cannot be used to explain organized complexity because any God capable of designing anything would have to be complex enough to demand the same kind of explanation in his own right."

Let me first say something about this negative argument. It depends, I believe, on a misunderstanding of the conclusion of the argument from design, in its traditional sense as an argument for the existence of God. If the argument is supposed to show that a supremely adept and intelligent natural being, with a super-body and a super-brain, is responsible for the design and the creation of life on earth, then of course this "explanation" is no advance on the phenomenon to be explained: if the existence of plants, animals, and people requires explanation, then the existence of such a super-being would require explanation for exactly the same reason. But if we consider what that reason is, we will see that it does not apply to the God hypothesis.

The reason that we are led to the hypothesis of a designer by considering both the watch and the eye is that these are complex physical structures that carry out a complex function, and we cannot see how they could have come into existence out of unorganized matter purely on the basis of the purposeless laws of physics. For the elements of which they are composed to have come together in just this finely tuned way purely as a result of physical and chemical laws would have been such an improbable fluke that we can regard it in effect as impossible: the hypothesis of chance can be ruled out. But God, whatever he may be, is not a complex physical inhabitant of the natural world. The explanation of his existence as a chance concatenation of atoms is not a possibility for which we must find an alternative, because that is not what anybody means by God. If the God hypothesis makes sense at all, it offers a different kind of explanation from those of physical science: purpose or intention of a mind without a body, capable nevertheless of creating and forming the entire physical world. The point of the hypothesis is to claim that not all explanation is physical, and that there is a mental, purposive, or intentional explanation more fundamental than the basic laws of physics, because it explains even them.

ALL EXPLANATIONS COME TO an end somewhere. The real opposition between Dawkins's physicalist naturalism and the God hypothesis is a disagreement over whether this end point is physical, extensional, and purposeless, or mental, intentional, and purposive. On either view, the ultimate explanation is not itself explained. The God hypothesis does not explain the existence of God, and naturalistic physicalism does not explain the laws of physics.

This entire dialectic leaves out another possibility, namely that there are teleological principles in nature that are explained neither by intentional design nor by purposeless physical causation—principles that therefore provide an independent end point of explanation for the existence and form of living things. That, more or less, is the Aristotelian view that was displaced by the scientific revolution. Law-governed causation by antecedent conditions became the only acceptable form of scientific explanation, and natural tendencies toward certain ends were discredited. The question then became whether non-teleological physical law can explain everything, including the biological order.

Darwin's theory of natural selection offered a way of accounting for the exquisite functional organization of orga-

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nisms through physical causation, an explanation that revealed it to be the product neither of design nor of hopelessly improbable chance. This is the positive part of Dawkins's argument. The physical improbability of such complexity's arising can be radically reduced if it is seen as the result of an enormous number of very small developmental steps, in each of which chance plays a part, together with a selective force that favors the survival of some of those forms over others. This is accomplished by the theory of heritable variation, due to repeated small mutations in the genetic material, together with natural selection, due to the differential adaptation of these biological variations to the environments in which they emerge. The result is the appearance of design without design, purely on the basis of a combination of physical causes operating over billions of years.

To be sure, this is only the schema for an explanation. Most of the details of the story can never be recovered, and there are many issues among evolutionary biologists over how the process works. There are also skeptics about whether such a process is capable, even over billions of years, of generating the complexity of life as it is. But I will leave those topics aside, because the biggest question about this alternative to design takes us outside the theory of evolution.

IT IS A QUESTION THAT DAWKINS recognizes and tries to address, and it is directly analogous to his question for the God hypothesis: who made God? The problem is this. The theory of evolution through heritable variation and natural selection reduces the improbability of organizational complexity by breaking the process down into a very long series of small steps, each of which is not all that improbable. But each of the steps involves a mutation in a carrier of genetic information—an enormously complex molecule capable both of self-replication and of generating out of surrounding matter a functioning organism that can house it. The molecule is moreover capable sometimes of surviving a slight mutation in its structure to generate a slightly different organism that can also survive. Without such a replicating system there could not be heritable variation, and without heritable variation there could not be natural selection favoring those organisms, and their underlying genes, that are best adapted to the environment.

The entire apparatus of evolutionary explanation therefore depends on the prior existence of genetic material with these remarkable properties. Since 1953 we have known what that material is, and scientists are continually learning more about how DNA does what it does. But since the existence of this material or something like it is a precondition of the possibility of evolution, evolutionary theory cannot explain its existence. We are therefore faced with a problem analogous to that which Dawkins thinks faces the argument from design: we have explained the complexity of organic life in terms of something that is itself just as functionally complex as what we originally set out to explain. So the problem is just pushed back one step: how did such a thing come into existence?

Of course there is a huge difference between this explanation and the God hypothesis. We can observe DNA and see how it works. But the problem that

"Friedrich Dürrenmatt has always been too impulsive for his times but the chaotic world has quickly caught up with him. That's why his work will last."—Peter Brook

Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Selected Writings

Translated by Joel Agee

Edited and with Introductions by Kenneth J. Northcott, Theodore Ziolkowski, and Brian Evenson

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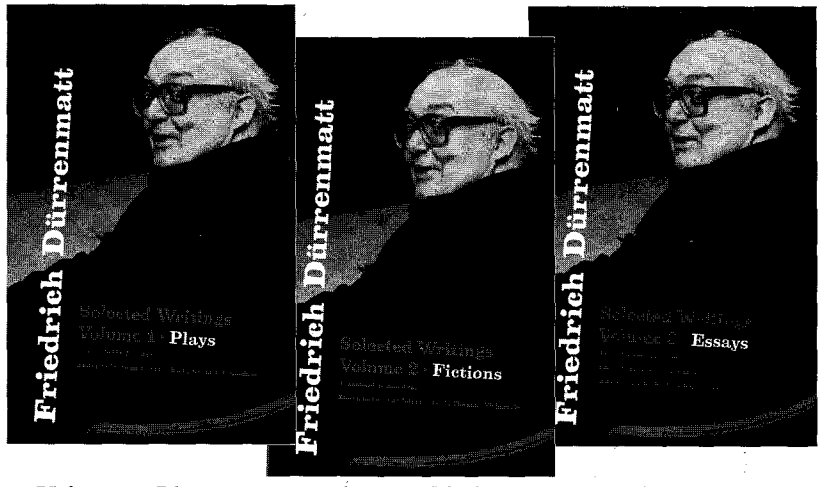

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originally prompted the argument from design—the overwhelming improbability of such a thing coming into existence by chance, simply through the purposeless laws of physics—remains just as real for this case. Yet this time we cannot replace chance with natural selection.

Dawkins recognizes the problem, but his response to it is pure hand-waving. First, he says it only had to happen once. Next, he says that there are, at a conservative estimate, a billion billion planets in the universe with life-friendly physical and chemical environments like ours. So all we have to suppose is that the probability of something like DNA forming under such conditions, given the laws of physics, is not much less than one in a billion billion. And he points out, invoking the so-called anthropic principle, that even if it happened on only one planet, it is no accident that we are able to observe it, since the appearance of life is a condition of our existence.

Dawkins is not a chemist or a physicist. Neither am I, but general expositions of research on the origin of life indicate that no one has a theory that would support anything remotely near such a high probability as one in a billion billion. Naturally there is speculation about possible non-biological chemical precursors of DNA or RNA. But at this point the origin of life remains, in light of what is known about the huge size, the extreme specificity, and the exquisite functional precision of the genetic material, a mystery—an event that could not have occurred by chance and to which no significant probability can be assigned on the basis of what we know of the laws of physics and chemistry.

Yet we know that it happened. That is why the argument from design is still alive, and why scientists who find the conclusion of that argument unacceptable feel there must be a purely physical explanation of why the origin of life is not as physically improbable as it seems. Dawkins invokes the possibility that there are vastly many universes besides this one, thus giving chance many more opportunities to create life; but this is just a desperate device to avoid the demand for a real explanation.

I agree with Dawkins that the issue of design versus purely physical causation is a scientific question. He is correct to dismiss Stephen Jay Gould's position that science and religion are "non-overlapping magisteria." The conflict is real. But although I am as much of an outsider to religion as he is, I believe it is much more difficult to settle the question than he thinks. I also suspect there are other possibilities besides these two that have not even been thought of yet. The fear of religion leads too many scientifically minded atheists to cling to a defensive, world-flattening reductionism. Dawkins, like many of his contemporaries, is hobbled by the assumption that the only alternative to religion is to insist that the ultimate explanation of everything must lie in particle physics, string theory, or whatever purely extensional laws govern the elements of which the material world is composed.

This reductionist dream is nourished by the extraordinary success of the physical sciences in our time, not least in their recent application to the understanding of life through molecular biology. It is natural to try to take any successful intellectual method as far as it will go. Yet the impulse to find an explanation of everything in physics has over the last fifty years gotten out of control. The concepts of physical science provide a very special, and partial, description of the world that experience reveals to us. It is the world with all subjective consciousness, sensory appearances, thought, value, purpose, and will left out. What remains is the mathematically describable order of things and events in space and time.

That conceptual purification launched the extraordinary development of physics and chemistry that has taken place since the seventeenth century. But reductive physicalism turns this description into an exclusive ontology. The reductionist project usually tries to reclaim some of the originally excluded aspects of the world, by analyzing them in physical—that is, behavioral or neurophysiological—terms; but it denies reality to what cannot be so reduced. I believe the project is doomed—that conscious experience, thought, value, and so forth are not illusions, even

Question About an Old Question

Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere?

Ubi sunt—not just all those makers of trope
And weavers of figure who, when yet one more
Of their number dies, keep asking without hope
What was so emptily asked so often before;
A darker riddle with no answer looms
In the twilight of knowledge with its fading glow
For those who linger on among the tombs:
Where am I, *though*—
*Ubi sum adhuc qui maneo?**

We all know where it is they've gone, the dead:
Beyond Noplace, far into wide Nowhere.
Where the very adverb *where?*, instead
Of inquiring, dissolves in meaningless air;
And Nowhere, that growing vast anterior
Into which everything alive will flow—
"Nowhere!" too easily answers the querier.
Where am I, *though*—
Ubi sum adhuc qui maneo?

Where's *A*, where's *B*, where's silly *C*, where *D*
The drunk, and poor, dear *E*, the broken-hearted?
Where lusty *F*, where displaced *H*, where *G*?
(We knew the answer long before we started)
But where is *I*, singer of this refrain
On a sea that shifts as all the others row
Out into nothing, but on which I remain,
Where am I, though—
Ubi sum adhuc qui maneo?

Where am I? *Here* and *there* and, for the time
Being, traveling downward from back *then*
To *now*, then making the too-easy climb
Upward into a future *now* again—
Where? What can that mean? All that's now apparent
Is where it is we all are going to go
Drawn along by a deep, relentless current.
Until then, though
Ubi sum adhuc qui maneo?

**Where am I, who yet remain?*

JOHN HOLLANDER

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though they cannot be identified with physical facts.

I also think that there is no reason to undertake the project in the first place. We have more than one form of understanding. Different forms of understanding are needed for different kinds of subject matter. The great achievements of physical science do not make it capable of encompassing everything, from mathematics to ethics to the experiences of a living animal. We have no reason to dismiss moral reasoning, introspection, or conceptual analysis as ways of discovering the truth just because they are not physics.

Any anti-reductionist view leaves us with very serious problems about how the mutually irreducible types of truths about the world are related. At least part of the truth about us is that we are physical organisms composed of ordinary chemical elements. If thinking, feeling, and valuing aren't merely complicated physical states of the organism, what are they? What is their relation to the brain processes on which they seem to depend? More: if evolution is a purely physical causal process, how can it have brought into existence conscious beings?

A religious worldview is only one response to the conviction that the physical description of the world is incomplete. Dawkins says with some justice that the will of God provides a too easy explanation of anything we cannot otherwise understand, and therefore brings inquiry to a stop. Religion need not have this effect, but it can. It would be more reasonable, in my estimation, to admit that we do not now have the understanding or the knowledge on which to base a comprehensive theory of reality.

Dawkins seems to believe that if people could be persuaded to give up the God Hypothesis on scientific grounds, the world would be a better place—not just intellectually, but also morally and politically. He is horrified—as who cannot be?—by the dreadful things that continue to be done in the name of religion, and he argues that the sort of religious conviction that includes a built-in resistance to reason is the true motive behind many of them. But there is no connection between the fascinating philosophical and scientific questions posed by the argument from design and the attacks of September 11. Blind faith and the authority of dogma are dangerous; the view that we can make ultimate sense of the world only by understanding it as the expression of mind or purpose is not. It is unreasonable to think that one must refute the second in order to resist the first. ■

Peter Green

Shrieks and Floods

DECCA: THE LETTERS OF JESSICA MITFORD
Edited by Peter Y. Sussman
(Alfred A. Knopf, 735 pp., $35)

I.

AT ABOUT THE TURN OF THE millennium, Mary Lovell was working on her joint biography of the six Mitford sisters. When she answered inquiries about the subject of her research, she noticed that while older acquaintances would nod in recognition, those of a younger generation (more or less anyone under fifty) tended to reply, "And who are they?" Alas for ephemeral fame. Lovell called her book *The Mitford Girls*, and that telltale word "girls," even if given a British upper-class polish by being pronounced "gels," dates the group inexorably. Yet for almost half a century, starting at about 1930, the activities, and in some cases the publications, of Nancy, Pam, Unity, Diana, Jessica (Decca), and Deborah (Debo) Mitford provided steady fodder for gossips and columnists. On occasion they went further and created a political furor, to the intense embarrassment of their mildly eccentric parents, minor aristocrats who cherished provincial obscurity.

Unity and Diana were enthusiastic fascists and close personal friends of Adolf Hitler. Unity published a violently anti-Semitic letter in Julius Streicher's Jew-baiting fortnightly *Der Stürmer*, attempted suicide in Germany the day World War II was declared, and was shipped home via Switzerland at the Führer's expense with a bullet lodged in her skull. Diana, the chocolate-box blonde, married the British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley, and both of them were imprisoned in 1940 under Rule 18B of the Emergency Powers Act as potential quislings (an improbable rumor had it that a Nazi-occupied Britain would see Mosley installed as Hitler's chosen overlord). When they were released in 1943 on the grounds of Mosley's ill health, there were huge and angry public demonstrations.

Nancy, the oldest daughter, was also the most conformist. A dedicated aesthete but unlucky in her choice of men, she married, and eventually divorced, the appalling Peter Rodd, the model for Evelyn Waugh's Basil Seal. Her main claim to fame was a series of light and witty novels, the best and most appropriately named of which was *The Pursuit of Love*, a romanticized version of her hopeless passion for Charles de Gaulle's wartime *chef de cabinet*, Gaston Palewski. In 1946 she domiciled herself in France (a comparatively mild act of family rebellion) and became a self-styled expert on upper-class English mores and the French *ancien régime*. Palewski, though enskied in her novel as a ducal aristocrat, was not impressed: after a long on-and-off liaison, he married a French divorcée instead.

Debo, the youngest and the sole living survivor of the sextet, was notable as a child for passing out in a dead faint when confronted by anything really unpleasant, such as difficult geometry or a sister getting engaged to her crush of the moment. When she grew up, however, she did what she always said she would do: she got to be a duchess. Marrying Andrew Cavendish, who in 1950 became the eleventh duke of Devonshire, she devoted herself with obsessional determination to the rescue (from physical deterioration and crippling death taxes) of Chatsworth, the ancestral seat now famous from endless movies. Chatsworth's treasures, estate, gardens, and farmyard—poultry included—inspired her to turn out a series of tourist-friendly bestsellers. Even the retiring Pam (known to her siblings, patronizingly, as "Woman,"

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and suspected by Decca of having "become a you-know-what-bian") contrived to marry a brilliant Oxford professor of spectroscopy, Derek Jackson, an RAF hero who also, not to be outdone in eccentricity, rode his own horse in the Grand National.

All these five, even if sometimes in a pathological fashion, subscribed throughout their lives to most of the upper-class rural code according to which they had been brought up. They were used to horses, farm animals, and privilege. Casual anti-Semitism was endemic. Exposure to the world at large was strictly limited. The lower orders were fine so long as they knew their place and staffed the great houses at minimum wages. Abroad was awful, as Uncle Matthew—the famous fictional version of their father, Lord Redesdale—proclaimed in *The Pursuit of Love*, and foreigners were fiends. Family mockery flourished, sadistic teasing elevated to a fine art.

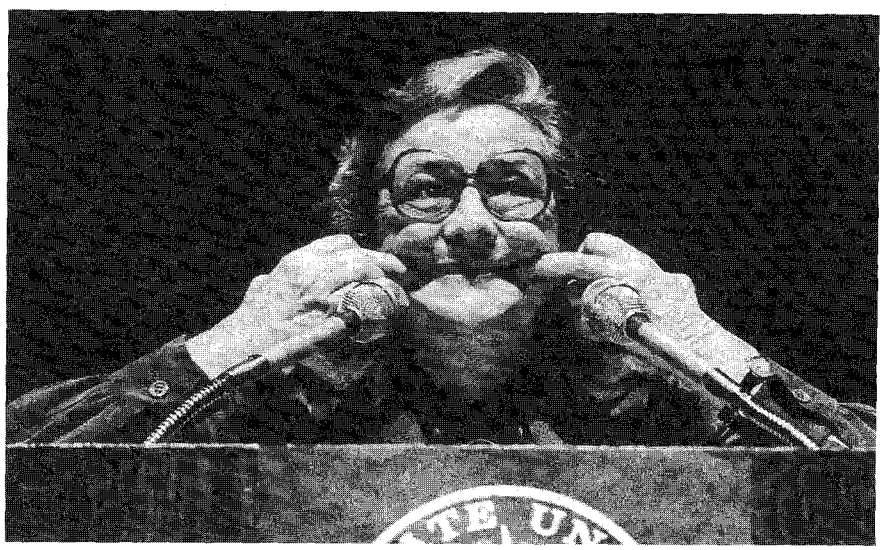
The Mitford girls acquired "finish" rather than education. Apart from occasional brief experiments that generally ended in expulsion, they were kept away from schools, though their one brother, Tom, went to Eton. Their father claimed that not only would they meet "the wrong sort" of girls there, but that hockey would give them undesirably thick calf muscles. (He never foresaw the unschooled Decca becoming as vulnerable to Marxism as a nineteenth-century Polynesian to the measles.) Like fairy-tale princesses, these siblings were exclusively processed, via a "coming-out season," for an early and, preferably, both socially and financially improving marriage, this being regarded as their sole proper goal in life, end of story.

Politically and sexually, they were brought up as conservative innocents. Freud was a nervous joke and Marx the embodiment of the class enemy: better dead than Red. All this suggests why Rudolf Hess thought he might get a sympathetic hearing when he flew to Scotland in 1941 to seek a negotiated peace through the agency of the duke of Hamilton: wouldn't all good upper-class Aryans unite against the Bolshevik rabble? He hadn't reckoned on the British finding Hitler not only monomaniacal but ridiculous, and the Final Solution obscene. But upper-crust English mores in the 1930s (and particularly the way Unity and Diana enthusiastically embraced Nazism) show, with uncomfortable clarity, just how he could have arrived at the conclusion that he did.

As for English anti-Semitism, what about Mosley's British Union of Fascists? And had not a certain royal duke startled his fellow officers in the mess by remarking, casually, "One thing you have to give this Hitler johnny, he knows how to deal with the long-nosed brigade"? Lord Redesdale felt it necessary to write to *The Times* stating that he had never been a fascist. His wife and two of his daughters remained lifelong Nazi sympathizers. His only son, Tom, requested a posting to Burma (where he was killed in action) rather than take part in the invasion of the Third Reich. After Tom's death, Unity wore his Sam Browne belt under her clothes. Shown films of the death camps, she said: "That's all propaganda, there was a typhoid epidemic and it's the way of getting rid of the bodies."

The Mitford sisters made the tradition they were born to look more than usually odd, for several reasons. The overwhelming preponderance of women in the Redesdales' brood meant that the main redeeming feature of that tradition—public service, and in particular wartime military service—was seldom taken into consideration. Their family upbringing, with its echoes of *Cold Comfort Farm*, was eccentric enough in reality, but made to look considerably odder through its widely publicized, and in places hair-raising, mythification in Nancy's novels. And in striking contrast to those dim horsey debs and vacuous young men, brainless and chinless, filling the social pages of *Tatler*, who were the true products of the rural elite and offered so tempting a target to left-wing critics—in striking contrast to all that, the Mitford children turned out quite exceptionally articulate, imaginative, and determined, with sharp if spottily educated minds of their own, and no inhibitions about letting their opinions be heard.

Nancy and her siblings over-reacted to everything, constantly veering (as they themselves admitted) between "shrieks [of laughter] and floods [of tears]." All their lives they preserved their early nicknames (Bobo, Honks, and so on) and private languages (Eggy-Peggy, Boudledidge). The nursery was never far away. Shrieks and floods continued unabated.



COURTESY ALFRED A. KNOPF

Jessica Mitford, circa 1965

The system in which they were brought up idealized a mixture of strict discipline, socialized physical skills (horseback riding, ice skating), and the artificial preservation of childish innocence; shunned all unregulated outside contacts; and might have been designed to avoid emotional adulthood altogether. Thus these infants disguised as grown-ups were all set to create mayhem when at last—naïvely confident, and full of that peculiar arrogance born of privileged innocence—they finally escaped from their parental cocoon and took on a world of which hitherto they had had virtually no real experience.

II.

IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT ONE MEMber of this obstreperous brood should turn Bolshie in earnest; should rebel not only against the

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family as such but also against the entire class structure and national ethos that sustained it; should, in fact, wholeheartedly embrace the opposition. This was Jessica's role, and throughout her life she played it with skill and relish. Where Diana and Unity had gone fascist, she was (for a while) a card-carrying communist. Where her siblings had all remained aggressively upper-class English, with some if not all of their father's built-in prejudices, she not only emigrated to the United States but took American citizenship. Where they married into large estates (the number of great houses that between them they owned or occupied is quite phenomenal), Jessica and her second husband, a Jewish left-wing labor lawyer, spent most of their married lives in the decidedly unsmart urban sprawl of Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco. Though she adapted to her new life and country with enthusiasm, she never lost her upper-crust English drawl and mannerisms. She also became a dedicated crusader for righting social wrongs (as Kenneth Tynan said of Shaw, her forte was intellectual slum clearance rather than town planning), and to that end turned herself into a fine muckraking journalist (her own description). She comes across, overall, as by far the most likable of the Mitford sisterhood, if not always the most honest.

In later life Decca claimed to have been an unhappy rebel right from the start, against what in irritated moments she referred to as her "filthy fascist family," with most members of which she nevertheless maintained a lifelong affectionate correspondence. But the cumulative testimony of siblings and friends, with surprising unanimity, insists that until late adolescence she was a cheerful enough child, and anything but radical. True, at the age of eleven she opened a "running-away account" at the local bank, getting a delectably straight-faced response from the manager, who clearly knew just how to handle an Honorable of whatever age. She was also furious at not being allowed to go to school, and (unlike her sisters) proved a duffer on a horse. But her real political and social awakening seems to have been triggered by debates with Unity, at some point after 1930, in the famous Hons' Cupboard, the meeting place of a secret society that Decca and Debo invented. Unity was already moving toward fascism; Decca provided the opposition.

A year or two later, Decca's budding romantic radicalism was fully awakened by the shock tactics of Esmond Romilly, an eighteen-year-old professional *enfant terrible* who also happened to be Winston Churchill's nephew (and in some circles was rumored to be his son). Expelled from his public school and sent to a remand home as "uncontrollable," he went off to Spain and fought with the International Brigade. One of the only survivors of an incompetently fought battle, invalided home in an aura of heroic left-wing glamour, he was the shining prince of Decca's dreams: she fell in love with him long before she met him. When they did meet, at a dinner party, the attraction was instant and mutual. Esmond, planning to return to Spain as a correspondent, offered to take Decca as his "secretary." She accepted at once. The "running-away fund" yielded fifty pounds. An elaborate cover story fooled her parents till she and Esmond were on the Continent.

Then, as so often with the Mitfords' escapades, the newspapers got hold of the story, and a high-life *opera buffa*, complete with headlines ("Consul Chases Peer's Daughter," etc.), proceeded to play itself out. The Redesdales used their connections. Churchill became involved. So did the foreign secretary, Anthony Eden. A British destroyer sent to Spain to take away British refugees was rumored to be there solely to pick up Jessica, who meanwhile had been made a ward of the court to stop her from marrying Esmond (at nineteen, she was still a minor). Insults were hurled to and fro. The couple left in the destroyer, but disembarked in France. Lady Redesdale came out to assess the situation. Jessica played her ace by confiding that she was pregnant. The court order was rescinded, and the wedding took place in Bayonne. After a few months' borderline poverty (during which Esmond wrote his war memoir, *Boadilla*, and gambled all their savings away) the couple returned to England, she heavily *enceinte*, he firmly under the impression that they were victims rather than the thoughtless cause of considerable anxiety and distress.

A friend loaned them an apartment in Rotherhithe, near the London docks. The first electricity bill stunned Decca, who till then had vaguely assumed that

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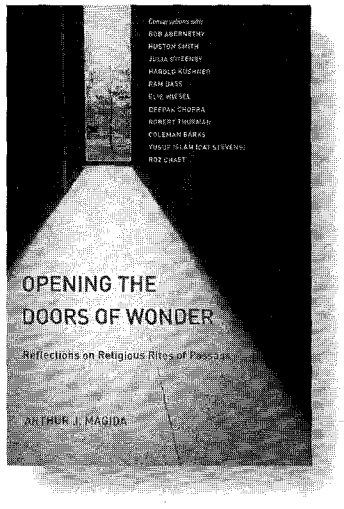
—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.



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BY ARTHUR J. MAGIDA

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heat and light were natural to a home and did not have to be paid for. She also had only the most rudimentary ideas of housework. Esmond tried to keep her from seeing her family (this, admittedly, was when Unity and Diana were junketing with Hitler and other Nazi leaders). Her daughter Julia died at four months from a lethal mixture of measles and pneumonia, after which she and Esmond fled to Corsica to recover. On their return she had a back-street abortion. They were pursued by writ-servers. This was in 1938. At twenty-one Decca got a nest-egg of one hundred pounds from her mother. Esmond talked the American embassy into granting them green cards, and the following February they sailed for New York. Decca's father cut her out of his will and died without ever seeing her again. She never returned to England, except for brief visits. Though she clearly had no idea of this at the time, a new stage in her life had begun.

MUCH OF THE BAD PRESS Decca got later, from her family in particular, stems from the brief and violent period in her life when she was married to—and totally besotted by—Esmond Romilly. Charges of fecklessness, dishonesty (including petty pilfering from rich friends' houses), freeloading, extravagance, scam artistry, and—above all—systematic rewriting of the truth ("All those lies, hen," Debo complained) can mostly be traced back to Esmond, whose way of life simply swallowed Decca whole, and to Decca's first volume of autobiography, *Hons and Rebels* (published in the United States as *Daughters and Rebels*), in large part an apologia and justification for this early phase in her career. Hence her self-portrait as an unhappy rebel from the egg, and the depiction of her father in particular as a kind of authoritarian monster.

Critics, no less than her siblings, were not slow to point out that her version of the family owed more to Nancy's fictional characters in *The Pursuit of Love* than to their real-life originals. Eccentric the Redesdales may have been (Decca's mother thought germs were a myth, poured doctors' prescriptions down the sink, and believed the "Good Body" would always heal itself), but all the evidence suggests that they were devoted to their unruly brood. Nancy thought Esmond the most horrible man that she had ever met, and one can see why.

Had Esmond survived, one wonders how long Decca would have continued to put up with his gambling, his shyster pitches to wealthy potential benefactors, his hand-to-mouth jobs (running a bar in Miami being the solidest), his loud professions of victimization. He was also an unrepentant Stalinist: when he read *Darkness at Noon*, his sympathies were entirely with Rubashov's interrogators. But the one part of the aristocratic creed that still had its grip on Esmond was wartime duty to one's country. Inimical to British spit-and-polish, he instead joined the Canadian Air Force. Confident in his own immortality, he trained as a navigator, and was drowned when his plane ditched in the North Sea, leaving Decca with a ten-month-old baby girl, Constancia, known (in good family tradition) as Dinky. Privilege and family connections aced political radicalism: Decca got a personal interview with (and a $500 check from) "Cousin Winston," then visiting Roosevelt in the White House. This didn't stop her sounding off to him about Diana and Mosley.

What is noteworthy is the transformation that took place in Decca after Esmond's death (which, characteristically, she never fully faced or acknowledged: it rated a brief footnote only in *Hons and Rebels*). She took stenography lessons. She got a job with the Office of Price Administration. She took in boarders to help pay the rent. She firmly refused her mother's requests to come home. She used her connections sensibly, and met good friends, including a young Harvard-educated enforcement attorney named Bob Treuhaft, whom she sometimes assisted on black-market surveillance operations, and whose sense of humor matched her own. Promotions followed. Confused in her feelings about Bob, and still mourning Esmond, she applied for, and got, a transfer to the OPA's San Francisco office. She and Bob wrote to each other regularly, sharing politics and jokes. In 1943, Bob transferred to San Francisco and they were married. Decca obtained American citizenship and joined the Communist Party, listing her father's occupation as "miner." (He had once prospected for gold in Ontario, at a town called Swastika, where Unity was conceived—a nice case of truth putting fiction in the shade.) This was, in every sense, a radical makeover. It proved successful, and it lasted for the rest of Decca's life.

III.

THERE IS SOMETHING HIGHLY ironic about Decca's demand (possibly as the result of a Communist Party directive) for the Mosleys to be kept in jail, basically for what they were and what they believed, rather than on account of any specific offense that they had committed, since it was not long before her and her husband's own political activism, especially on behalf of the Civil Rights Congress, became the target of an identical kind of official animus. Like the Mosleys, they lost their passports. They were threatened with imprisonment. They attracted the attention of the FBI and Senator McCarthy. Decca campaigned fearlessly in the Deep South, at considerable personal risk, on behalf of black Americans. This period shows her at her best.

Still, the idea (which she encouraged, and has found some takers) that she embraced communism only because it offered the sole practical channel for dealing with America's domestic evils looks dubious in the light of her party-line adherences. A letter to her mother-in-law in November 1956, reacting to the Soviet invasion of Hungary, trots out the official blather about saving socialism from a fascist coup, her protestations of concern for Budapest notwithstanding. It was another two years before she and Bob left the party, and even then only because (they claimed) the CPA, as a tool of Moscow, had ceased to be a force for social democracy at home.

Decca's political views also had their comic side. In 1938, Lord Redesdale had acquired a remote Hebridean island called Inch Kenneth and deeded it to Tom; when Tom died intestate in Burma, under Scottish law the property passed to his siblings. Decca wanted to make over her share to the British CP. Luckily, the party stalwarts didn't want it ("What the hell does anyone think we can do

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with a small little bit of a desolate island somewhere off the coast of Scotland?") and the idea was dropped. In the end Decca bought the island herself and installed her mother there with a life tenancy. Capitalism and Marxism always co-existed nicely in her mind.

Marxism, in fact, played a key role in making her fortune. It was (as Jonathan Guinness acutely noted in *The House of Mitford*) the Marxist attitude to criticizing the ethical systems of dominant groups—don't get lost in particular malpractices, concentrate on generic essentials—that Decca deployed to such lethal effect in her investigative journalism, above all in her famous best-selling broadside against the American funeral industry. It was *The American Way of Death*, even more than *Hons and Rebels*, that made her not only a celebrity in the United States (establishing her reputation as an outspoken and highly effective social maverick, a natural for talk shows and TV interviews), but also a wealthy woman.

Evelyn Waugh's inspired send-up of Forest Lawn cemetery in *The Loved One* had shown that the industry's cynically pietistic exploitation of death and bereavement formed an ideal subject for witty schadenfreude. Bob supplied legal expertise. Decca did thorough homework, conducted innumerable interviews, honed her writing style, and produced a brilliant indictment that not only exposed a shameful racket but was also, especially in its deadpan recording of the undertaking profession's own *obiter dicta*, extraordinarily funny. She went on to tackle various other scams, most notably the Famous Writers School for aspiring wannabe authors and Elizabeth Arden's fashionable fat farm, but never again with quite the same mix of savage wit and deadly accuracy that gives *The American Way of Death* its fascination. The only event powerful enough to put a dent in its sales was the assassination of John Kennedy.

So Jessica Mitford became an American radical icon, one of this nation's odder assimilated imports; and just as she found no difficulty in reconciling communism with soaring royalties, so she never hesitated to use her English aristocratic background and her family's rural eccentricities to manipulate an audience that (as jokes involving the Kennedys made very clear) still had a romantic thing about titles and coronets. When Debo visited, the Oakland comrades turned up in droves to shake hands with a real live duchess. Nor did political differences always trump family loyalties. True, Decca was not "on speakers," as she put it, with Diana for much of her life after Diana's marriage to Mosley; but though she hated what Unity had done, her letter to her, when Unity came back to England a sad brain-damaged incontinent wreck, was full of love and compassion. She maintained a skilful balancing act between what Sir Thomas Browne once described as "divided and distinguished worlds"; but adapt as she might, in the last resort she was English to the core, and that, paradoxically, together with her giant-killing moxie, formed a major—if perhaps unconscious—ingredient in her appeal to American readers and viewers.

IV.

All this means that a major collection of her letters should also be a major literary event. Decca's constant public exposure meant that she knew just about everyone worth knowing. She was involved, directly or indirectly, with some of the twentieth century's most momentous events, from the rise of Nazism through the Spanish Civil War to the civil rights movement in the southern states. Like Nancy, she was a devoted correspondent, with a wide circle of friends, a mischievous sense of fun, and a vast appetite for life that was hardly diminished, in her last years, by the ravages of chain-smoking and alcoholism.

Yet the sad truth is that her innumerable letters—in sharp contrast to her journalism—are superficial, often obtuse, full of bright protective jollity, unashamedly nursery-orientated with her siblings, and, on those rare occasions when emotional depth (generally avoided like the plague) becomes imperative, either strangulated or, more often, discreetly silent. The real hero of *Decca: The Letters of Jessica Mitford* is its editor, Peter Y. Sussman, whose running footnotes on Decca's elusive friends and recondite allusions are a continual delight, and whose linking essays on the various stages of Decca's career form by far the most substantial and rewarding part of this weighty and often yawn-provoking volume.

When we ask ourselves what the trouble is here, the answer is not far to seek. All the sisters, in different ways, suffered from stunted emotional development as a result of their peculiar upbringing. They all developed strong adult passions, but these—through having been taught to shun such foreign aberrations during their formative years—they could neither control nor fully understand, and found scary as well as tempting. They dealt with them, in the true and tried upper-class British manner, by pretending that they weren't there and hoping that they would go away. Shrieks and floods were a fine way of letting off emotional steam over trivia, but when it came to the deep emotional challenges—love, death, betrayal—the Mitford girls' only recourse was stoic silence overlaid with resolutely cheerful social commonplaces. When the pressure became too great, it could prove fatal. After Palewski's marriage, Nancy succumbed to the cancer that eventually killed her. When Great Britain declared war on Germany, Unity put a pistol to her head. They had no more adult psychological defenses than the children who, in essence, they still were.

Decca, too, for all her legendary perdurability, had no recourse but to block out her moments of greatest suffering altogether: the deaths of Esmond, of her baby daughter Julia, of her ten-year-old son Nicholas, killed on his bicycle in a traffic accident. This kind of massive internalization, as she admitted long afterward, took its toll. In 1985, she learned that her husband was having an affair with the wife of an old friend, and we find her reacting thus to commonsense advice from Sally Belfrage: "I've re-read that para a dozen times & it's full of WISDOM & insight. Isn't it odd how it sometimes takes another person (but only an exceptional person like TOI) to show you what should be obvious, & right under yr nose?" Well, yes. No comfort like a platitude. When Kennedy was

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shot, she wrote to Debo that she couldn't "describe the feeling of utter horror at what has happened," so she didn't. When Michael Straight "outed" Anthony Blunt as a former Soviet agent, Decca's reaction (in a letter to Virginia Durr) was: "How very naughty—in fact HORRID of Mike to do that to poor Sir A, don't you agree?" Even espionage had its corner in the nursery.

IT WOULD BE SURPRISING, OF course, if there weren't any memorable chuckles or anecdotes in more than seven hundred pages, and I turned up quite a few, but you have to look for them. A lot of the teasing relationship between Decca and Esmond comes through in the long letters that she wrote to him while he was training in Canada (which she signed, disconcertingly, as "Your Very Loving Man"). On hearing about "Lyndon and Lady Bird," Lady Redesdale replied: "Who is Lady Bird? I looked her up in the Peerage, but could find no trace." Details surface of the Treuhafts' endless legal and political struggles—sometimes successful—on behalf of black prisoners (a postscript to Decca's mother reads: "I see [this letter] is full of references to jails, sorry, but that is where most of our friends are"). Nancy turns out to be chintzy to the point of eschewing airmail correspondence on the excuse of its being "so middle-class." Lady Redesdale remarks, reflectively, "Whenever I see a headline in the papers beginning 'Peer's Daughter...' I know it's going to be about one of you children." The teases could raise eyebrows: Decca once put an *Aesop's Fables* jacket on a copy of *Lolita* (a novel she adored) and mailed it, marked "Child's Book," to her cousin's fourteen-year-old daughter. Bob, we learn, had a surefire technique for stopping dogs pooping all over one's front lawn: peeing on it at strategic points. ("Could we patent this?" Decca wondered.)

But it is when we come to people, to other actual human beings, that Decca's inadequacies as a letter-writer are really striking. Oddly, this was something she prided herself on. Writing in 1991 to John Buchan's son William, she observed: "I can never remember anything about how things looked, a great disability. People & conversations—yes." Yet of all the public figures who pass through these pages, from John Kenneth Galbraith to M.F.K. Fisher, from Sonia Orwell to Hillary Clinton (who clerked for Treuhaft while at law school, something her later handlers preferred to forget), virtually none leave us with a clearer impression of them as individuals, and most leave no impression at all. A four-hour lunch with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor produces only the comment that they are "fascinators." We hear about "cousin Winston," but we don't hear him or see him. This is true even of bosom friends such as Maya Angelou, whose support for Clarence Thomas has Decca almost audibly gagging. There is a snippy sketch of Princess Margaret (described by Nancy as "the Royal Dwarf") sticking to introductory protocol at a very louche party. The one really memorable knock-off concerns Lyndon Johnson (whom Decca detested). There had been a White House staff salary increase, and someone inquired if it could be made retroactive. Johnson replied: "Ah am the President of the United States. Ah am the leader of the Free World. And you ask me a chicken-shit question like that." Him, we see.

At her best, Jessica Mitford reminds me of Bunyan's Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. As a journalist she took on, against dangerous opposition, some of the worst American bigotry and scams of the twentieth century, and with aristocratic insouciance made them seem not only wrong but also risible. At one point Vanessa and Lynn Redgrave wanted to make a movie about Decca and Unity (guess who was to play whom), but in the end, perhaps inevitably, what emerged instead was a musical comedy called *The Mitford Girls*. To get Decca's full range one needs to read not only her books, but the books about her. This huge volume of letters does not do her justice, leaving one with the impression of a bright chatty socially committed Oakland housewife with some eccentric relatives, and little more. Readers who come to it unprepared will have no real notion of her interesting background, or of the (to Americans) grotesque yet powerful upper-class English creed that left its indelible mark on her. An entry in her mother's 1937 engagement book (cited by Decca, so just possibly a sly parody) reads: "Heifer born today. Mabel 2 weeks hol. Decca married. Tea with Führer."

In death, Decca predictably stiffed the wealthy morticians (her funeral bill came to only $475), but her many friends saw this cheerful atheist off in style, with six plumed black horses pulling an antique glass-sided hearse loaded with her memorabilia, and the Green Street Mortuary Band belting out "When the Saints Come Marching In." She was no saint; but I find it easy to picture her launching an impassioned assault against the social inequalities in heaven, which must be legion, and thoroughly ticking off all the senior archangels in the process. ■

Chloë Schama

The Escape Artist

BLIND WILLOW, SLEEPING WOMAN
By Haruki Murakami
Translated by Philip Gabriel and Jay Rubin
(Alfred A. Knopf, 334 pp., $25)

PLENTY OF SUCCESSFUL WRITers have infelicitous beginnings. The writer who is condemned at the same time that he is commended is rarer. When, in Japan in 1979, the Gunzo Award for New Writers was given to Haruki Murakami for his first novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, the award committee found itself unable to explain its decision. One member ranked the book "somewhere between sixty and eighty-five" out of a hundred, only later conceding that it was "a good work." Another member of the committee chose the book because it was the least bad of the choices. The strongest defense offered was that the novel demonstrated a thorough understanding of American popular literature—faint praise for what was meant to be the best debut novel of the year in Japan.

But this tepid endorsement understood something that was critical to Murakami's writing at this early stage: his indifference toward Japanese tradition

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or even Japanese society. The narrator of *Hear the Wind Sing*, which Murakami began writing in English, is concerned with decidedly non-Japanese matters: President Kennedy's assassination and the life lessons from an invented American writer. This was a conscious decision on Murakami's part: "All I could think about when I began writing fiction in my youth was how to run as far as I could from the 'Japanese Condition,'" he would say later. "I wanted to distance myself as much as possible from the curse of the Japanese."

Murakami did not start writing until he was twenty-nine, but the great escape began early. He claims (to the likely chagrin of his parents, who were both teachers of Japanese literature) that he stopped reading Japanese writers in his teens, turning instead to nineteenth-century Europeans (Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, Dickens) and then to Americans (Vonnegut, Brautigan, Capote). He has called Raymond Carver—whose work he has translated into Japanese—"the greatest teacher I have ever had."

Taking all this into account, the insubstantial praise of the Gunzo committee was more precise than it seemed. Murakami is probably the most famous contemporary Japanese writer, yet his fiction often appears as though it could be set in almost any industrialized society. On the surface, the stories in *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* follow this pattern, taking place in hotels, restaurants, apartment buildings, and hospitals. Not one is set in a temple or a tea room. But the matter is not quite so simple. It is not easy to make a perfect escape. These stories have the rootless feel that characterizes much of Murakami's fiction, but they also reveal that Murakami might be more engaged with the culture he inherited than most would guess.

MURAKAMI IS A LITERARY phenomenon. *Norwegian Wood* (1987), the book that catapulted him to an international reputation, has sold more than four million copies in Japan alone. According to Jay Rubin's biography of Murakami, the writer's publisher, Kodansha, draped red and green banners across its Tokyo offices after *Norwegian Wood*'s extraordinary success so that the building resembled the cover of the novel. One newspaper coined a term—"The Norway Tribe"—for devotees who traipsed to the various places where scenes from the novel take place. A Japanese critic wrote in a review of Murakami's most recent novel, *Kafka on the Shore*, that "in any heavy storm there are always writers who hoist a torchlight in front of people.... Whatever happens in the world, I will watch his light."

And the enthusiasm of his fans goes beyond Japan: "Devotees ... not only remember the books, but we remember where we were when we first read them," claims the British writer David Mitchell. In my own experience, Mitchell's theory holds. When a colleague spotted *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (1992) on my desk a dreamy look stole across his face. He told me that he first read the book on a bus traveling from Narita to Tokyo. He was dead tired after a long flight but he could not stop reading. I could see from his face that he had been entranced.

But stunning statistics and a cult-like following do not prove literary merit. Descriptions of Murakami's writing rarely help to elucidate the evidence for or against his talent—too often they are either mired in admiration for his mysticism or frustrated by that same attribute. "Read it to your cat," wrote one critic in a glowing review of *Kafka on the Shore* in *The Washington Post*. "You can sense his peculiar grasp of the fathomless," gushed another. Of course the fathomless may also be formless. The novel has a "willful disregard for any kind of coherence," complained a less enthusiastic reviewer.

Fans and critics should not be chastised too severely for their inability to pinpoint Murakami's skill (or lack of it). His writing consistently relies on the idea that indefinite forces are the most affecting. In Murakami's work, the portentous and unsatisfying word "something" is never far away when a story or a novel reaches a critical point. Consider a few examples from the latest collection: "There was something special about the sixties"; "Something had happened, he thought, and the world had changed"; "His heart felt enclosed by something formless"; "At first it seemed like I could forget, but something remained inside me"; "Something had been lost." It's no wonder that his fans have a hard time explaining what they like. They like something.

The reason for Murakami's sensational impact may be more concrete: he writes protest literature, an irresistible form that is re-invented with every generation, and which no generation wants to be without. Murakami's protest speaks not only to his own generation, but to generations younger and older; and not only to the Japanese, but to people scattered across the globe. His protagonists are teenaged (Kafka from *Kafka on the Shore*), college-aged (Toru from *Norwegian Wood*), middle-aged (Hajime from *South of the Border, West of the Sun*), and elderly (Nakata from *Kafka on the Shore*). The rebel figure, set against conformity and commodity, appears throughout Murakami's work, and his presence graces much of *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*.

Murakami has been criticized for the very universality that seems so fundamental to his appeal. Kenzaburo Oe characterized Murakami's writing as failing to "appeal to intellectuals in the broad sense with models for Japan's present and future." This is a typical view among critics who dislike Murakami for his apparent reluctance to engage with Japanese problems. But for all his attention to global consumerism, there has always been more to Murakami than lifestyle studies. Whether the protests in which he has engaged amount to more than a raised fist against a vague (non-Japanese) entity, or whether they constitute a thoughtful model for Japan—well, that is the great Murakami question; and his coyness about it may be his finest trick.

THE STORIES IN *BLIND WILLOW, Sleeping Woman*, which were written throughout the course of Murakami's career, can be regarded as an inventory of his evolving discontents, demonstrating both his universal appeal as a writer of protest lit and his specific dissatisfactions with the Japanese literary establishment, with the failure of the student movements of the 1960s, and with what he sees as a dangerous historical forgetfulness. He shows evidence of a social consciousness, but these stories also demonstrate the nature of that social consciousness—veiled and metaphorical; obscure, and often willfully so. Whatever his vision of the world in which he lives, however engaged or disengaged with Japan, Murakami's power is mainly as a stylist. This is often the case with protest literature (even if it prides itself on its high substance), and it is what makes Murakami's writing seem universal.

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"The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes" is the most explicit example of Murakami's protest against authority. Murakami writes in the preface that the story "reveals my impressions of the literary world at the time of my debut." He is referring to the remnants of the *bundan* guild, an elite group of writers and critics who set the standards (didactic, moral, and uplifting) for "pure" literature in Japan for much of the twentieth century. This group conceived of itself as the defender of quality in the face of pulp, porn, and pop—particularly important after World War II, when the literary strictures of the pre-war era were loosened. The influence of the *bundan* guild was waning when Murakami began writing, but it still had its defenders, Oe among them.

In "Sharpie Cakes," Murakami attacks them head-on. The narrator enters a contest to invent a new recipe for a popular snack food, the sharpie cake. Realizing that the prevailing recipe is hopelessly outdated, he creates something more palatable to younger consumers. He almost wins, but the "Sharpie Crows," unappealing creatures with "globs of white fat" for eyes and bodies "swollen to the point of bursting," who are the ultimate authority within the company, cannot handle the narrator's innovation. When offered the cakes, the crows create a frenzied "free-for-all, blood calling forth more blood, rage leading to rage." The narrator then scolds the managing director of the company: "Now look what you've done! . . . You just threw the cakes in front of them like that all of a sudden. The stimulus was too strong." The lack of subtlety here is actually a strength; the bizarre and repulsive image of crows gone wild would hardly be effective in a less Boschian incarnation. The very specific object of Murakami's disgruntlement (an object that no longer seems relevant) becomes a larger emblem of authority, made grotesque and bloodthirsty to augment its absurdity.

"A Folklore for My Generation: A Pre-History of Late-Stage Capitalism" shows the hippie-era side of Murakami's protest writing. But this story is compelling not because of the narrator's counterculture attitude, but because of the way Murakami expresses it. The story is narrated by a disappointed middle-aged man reminiscing on the failings of the 1960s. "I was born in 1949," it begins, "entered junior high in 1961, and college in 1967. And reached my long-awaited twentieth birthday . . . during the height of the boisterous slapstick that was the student movement." The relevance of these temporal markers quickly dissipates in a wave of timelessly clichéd language; this was a time of "momentum and energy . . . tremendous spark of promise. . . . Heroism and villainy, ecstasy and disillusionment, martyrdom and betrayal." Violence and rock-and-roll, additional markers of ageless discontent, are invoked: "there were doors we had to kick in, right in front of us, and you better believe we kicked them in!"; "Jim Morrison, the Beatles, and Dylan blast[ed] out the sound track to our lives." It is a nice irony, the narrator relying on trite language to emphasize his generation's uniqueness. In interviews Murakami has repeatedly spoken of the frustrations that his generation went through. In this story, those frustrations are less interesting than the narrator's convincingly self-deluded voice.

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More and more, Murakami has used Japan's modern history—and the whitewashing of that history—as the locus of his discontent. This protest, of course, demands a certain amount of cultural specificity. It is here that Murakami uses the Japanese experience to the greatest extent; it is here that substance almost dominates over style. In "Tony Takitani," Tony's father, a jazz musician, escapes from Japan during World War II to live a life of decadence in China while the bombs fall elsewhere. He is a man who "possessed not the slightest hint of will or introspection . . . [who] wanted nothing more than to be able to play his trombone, eat three meals a day, and have a few women nearby." Murakami's rebuke is indirect; it is the son, not the father, who suffers most in the course of the story. (Like his father, Tony is generally apathetic about ethical contemplation and demanding emotional matters. When he is finally forced to face these things, the experience brings him more pain than joy.) But the moral is acute: responsibility does not die with each passing generation.

This type of didacticism is very evident in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1997), a novel that juxtaposes the Japanese invasion of Manchuria with the daily activities of an unemployed paralegal (making spaghetti, looking for a lost cat, picking up clothes at the cleaners). The invasion scenes are painfully graphic. Mongolian soldiers kill a man by removing his skin "slowly, carefully, almost lovingly" so that "the entire skin of Yamamoto's right arm [comes] off in a single thin sheet. . . . After that he skinned both legs, cut off the penis and testicles, and removed the ears." This goes on for many pornographically sickening pages. And violent action is not confined to the Mongolians. In a similarly lengthy scene, Japanese soldiers execute Chinese prisoners with bayonets: "they twisted the blades so as to rip the men's internal organs, and thrust the tips upward. . . . Their sliced-up bodies poured prodigious amounts of blood on the ground, but even with their organs shredded they went on twitching slightly for some time."

The point is to show the convergence between this world of savagery and the seemingly tranquil world of modern-day Japan. "I bet it's a lot easier to kill somebody than people think," muses a bored teenager, echoing the Mongolian soldiers' mantra while she tans. When Murakami was asked why his "generation should take responsibility for a war that ended before it was born," he answered, "Because we're Japanese." And when Ian Buruma profiled Murakami for *The New Yorker*, he reported that Murakami felt that violence was "the key to Japan." It is an old idea, though some of Murakami's readers may find it to their punk and grunge tastes, an Irvine Welsh from Japan.

Perhaps Murakami is responding to Oe's criticism, accepting a *sensei* role by forcing the Japanese to confront the past. A few months ago Murakami publicly condemned Shintaro Ishihara, the right-wing governor of Tokyo, as "a very dangerous man." Ishihara has been criticized for visiting the Yasukuni shrine that commemorates Japanese citizens who died in World War II, including convicted war criminals. Murakami told a reporter for the *South China Morning Post* that Japan's rightward political trajectory concerned him: "I feel I have a responsibility as a novelist to do some-

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thing." The novel that he is currently writing is said to include a critique of Japanese nationalism.

Murakami's real strength is not as a moral guide, as an indefatigable protestor. Whatever the sources of their inspiration, the stories in *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* are nothing like a serious critical evaluation of a national identity. These stories are a succession of disparate and abstracted discontents that do not add up to a political position. A protest against the universe is a pre-political protest, crippled by its own generality, best carried out by teenagers and lunatics. What redeems Murakami's writing from its puerility is its aestheticism: its haunting imagery, its credible voices, its allegorical play, its skill for surprise.

The stories are full of sly and unexpected combinations: the blending of a real world with a surreal world, the mixing of formulaic fictional structures with literary and linguistic experiment. "The Year of Spaghetti," for example, transforms a habit into a manifestation of contemporary anomie. The narrator's obsession with spaghetti, not an otherworldly call from "a girl so indistinct that, by four thirty, she might very well disappear altogether," becomes the truly odd element of the story. Peculiar details punctuate his ordinary actions: he cooks in a pot "big enough to hold a German shepherd." By the end of the story, his routine has morphed from banal to bizarre to an illustration of modern isolation: "Can you imagine how astonished the Italians would be if they knew that what they were exporting in 1971 was *loneliness*?"

"Where I'm Likely to Find It," which begins like a hard-boiled detective story, illustrates Murakami's adept manipulation of clichéd literary forms. A woman (with great legs, of course) asks a private investigator to locate her missing husband. The woman remains in the narrator's consciousness, clicking about in her high heels, but what really captivates him is her apartment building—more specifically, the landings of the staircase. He becomes fixated, visiting the staircase every day. He gathers no clues, but this stasis doesn't bother him. Nor does it seem important; whodunit expectations deflate with the expansion of his strange fascination. The search for the missing husband turns into a search for "something that could very well be shaped like a door. Or ... an umbrella, or a doughnut. Or an elephant." Perhaps there is symbolism behind these objects, perhaps not. It seems more likely that their randomness is meant to suggest that pat answers to mysteries, especially when you expect them, are most unlikely.

If Murakami is going to provide his country with any type of "torchlight"—and it is emphatically not the responsibility of the novelist to do so—it will come in the illumination of psychic implications where you least expect to find them: in a culinary routine, in the lonely landing of a staircase, in a refrigerator. "If it's art or literature you're looking for, you'd do well to read the Greeks," he wrote in *Hear the Wind Sing*. "Mere humans who root through their refrigerators at three o'clock in the morning can only produce writing that matches what they do." Even if the refrigerator is much less than the world, Murakami's remarkable talent is for showing us how much of the world may be found in the refrigerator. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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and alarmist (i.e., liberal) and George W. Bush as principled and determined (i.e., conservative) by saying that there are no plans on anyone's desk to invade Iran now ("Peace Now," October 2). The irony seems to escape him entirely. The complaint we weak-kneed liberals have is not that Bush is contemplating attacking Iran too soon. Our complaint is that someone as inept and out of touch with reality as he has always been will attempt to do so at all—and, furthermore, that we can't trust him to be honest about it. None of Kaplan's points reassure me that Bush is any more capable of assessing the reality of the situation than he was four years ago. Indeed, many of the key players in the "give war a chance" group are still in place. Invading Iraq was an unmitigated disaster that we will spend years cleaning up after, and our price has been low compared with that paid by the Iraqi people. Bush's offenses against the American people have been extensive but understandable given his political philosophy. His offenses against the people of Iraq constitute war crimes and cannot be allowed to expand to other countries.

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Port Jefferson, New York

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Shahid

"I AM NOW IN A CATASTROPHIC personal situation. Several death threats have been sent to me. ... On the websites condemning me there is a map showing how to get to my house to kill me, they have my photo, the places where I work, the telephone numbers, and the death warrant. ... There is no safe place for me, I have to beg two nights here, two nights there. ... I must cancel all scheduled events. The authorities urge me to keep moving." In the wake of an outrageous attempt to punish him for the views that he fearlessly writes and speaks, these desperate words were written last week by Tony Judt. No, wait, here comes the fact-checker. Sorry. Wrong martyr for truth. The words were written by Robert Redeker, a teacher of philosophy in a high school in Toulouse who wrote an article in *Le Figaro* in September claiming that there are aggressive and bigoted elements in the Koran and is living in hiding, under police protection, as a result. Last week also brought the news of the murder of the unimaginably valiant Anna Politkovskaya in Moscow. But here, where the fish are always jumpin' and the cotton is always high, the all-devouring controversy has been the cancellation of a talk by Tony Judt on "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" at the Polish Consulate in New York as a consequence of a communication from the Anti-Defamation League. "The phone calls were very elegant but may be interpreted as exercising a delicate pressure," the Consul General of Poland in New York told *The Washington Post*. Since I am satisfied that this was an attempt to interfere with the free expression of Judt's thinking, I have signed a high-minded letter of protest to the ADL. (The ADL's legitimate inquiry into whether the Polish government was endorsing the Mearsheimer-Walt view of the world could have been made after Judt's talk.) Judt has a perfect right to the expression of his opinion. But that is not the end of the matter. There remains the substance of his opinion, and the shabbiness of it.

IN A SERIES OF HOT-HEADED E-MAILS SENT to a variety of e-mail chains, one of which included myself and the rest of which were forwarded to me in the spirit of the free exchange of ideas, Judt misreported some of the facts of the case. Abraham Foxman, whom he insanely calls a "fascist," did not speak to anybody at the Polish consulate, as Judt claims he did, and neither Foxman nor anybody else at the ADL promised to "smear the charge of Polish collaboration with anti-Israeli anti-Semites all over the front page of every daily paper in the city." In one e-mail Judt paranoically maintains that *The New York Sun* learned of the incident within ten minutes, in another e-mail within seven minutes. Also, the newspaper is not owned by Rupert Murdoch—but the fascists are all alike, aren't they? Here is Judt on October 4: "Maybe you really do have to have grown up under Communism to recognise the house style of a demagogic rag like the New York Sun ... and yes, it helps to have read Kafka to know what it feels like to go to bed a liberal, secular historian of Jewish background and wake up the next morning an anti-semitic Israel-denier." Only somebody who did not grow up under communism and did not read Kafka could have written that sentence, or someone romantically involved with himself. Similarly, on October 3: "the public space for non-conforming opinion in this country is closing down." And "whatever your views of the Middle East I hope you find this as serious and frightening as I do. This is, or used to be, the United States of America." Amerika! So let us be clear. The censorship of Tony Judt is not working. He is one of the least suppressed, repressed, and oppressed intellectuals who ever lived. If there is life on Mars, it knows what he thinks. The fact that a position is unpopular does not mean that it is unknown. Dissidents should have thicker skins. (Many years ago, after I wrote something especially vicious against the Israeli settlers, I received in the mail a package of feces in aluminum foil. It stunk.) Anyway, Judt exaggerates his dissidence, the unpopularity of his anti-Bush, anti-war, and anti-Israel views, which are by now banalities. And his suggestion that he is not an "Israel-denier" is, quite simply, a lie. "When and where did I ever negate Israel's right to exist?" he indignantly asks Omer Bartov, just about the only one in this orgy of digital piety who refused to preen and insisted upon the factual basis of opinion. October 23, 2003, is when, *The New York Review of Books* is where. I have never met anybody of any persuasion who believes that Judt's call for a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in "Israel: The Alternative" was not a call for the abolition of the Jewish state.

I WONDER WHETHER THE *SHAHID* OF Washington Square and his champions have spoken or signed anything against the boycotts of Israeli academics; but I will leave the double-standards research to others. The more significant point is that what Judt was prevented from delivering at the Polish consulate was a conspiracy theory about the pernicious role of the Jews in the world. *That* is what the idea of "the Lobby" is. It is Mel Gibson's analysis of the Iraq war. It is not just an analysis of the impact of AIPAC on particular resolutions and policies: such an analysis requires a detailed knowledge of American government, specifically of Congress, that I suspect Judt does not possess and that his fellow heroes Mearsheimer and Walt have been shown to lack. It is a larger claim, a historical claim, a claim about a sinister causality, about the power of a small group to control the destiny of a large group. And it is a claim with a sordid history. Is it an anti-Semitic claim, or just a claim with an anti-Semitic past? I am told that at the recent debate about "the Lobby" at Cooper Union in New York, the moderator, Anne-Marie Slaughter, began by stipulating that the question of anti-Semitism was off the table, which was an attempt to inhibit the discussion. Tony Judt is not an anti-Semite, and bully for him. But here he is, on October 6, describing Joe Lieberman as "very ostentatiously Jewish." What the hell does that mean? Is Barack Obama very ostentatiously black? A person's politics is not just a reflection of a person's origins, of course; but Judt's writing about Israel and its Jewish supporters is icily lacking in decency, in *hesed*, a word that even an unostentatious Jew can understand. No amount of sympathy for the interests of the Palestinians requires this amount of antipathy to the interests of the Israelis. There are more scrupulous, more humane, more complex, and more helpful things to do with one's freedom.

LEON WIESELTIER

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An Assessment by Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education

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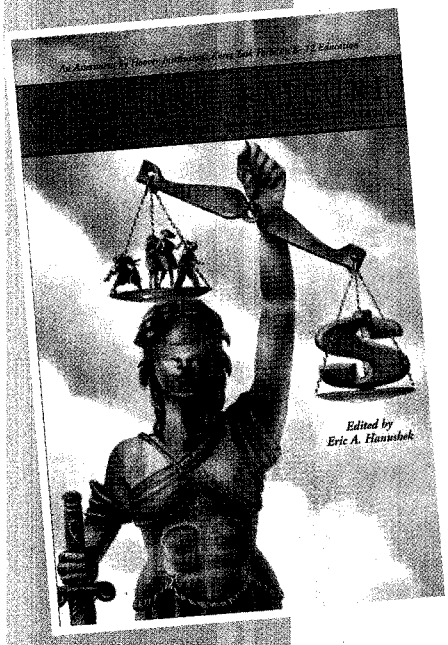

Courting Failure

How School Finance Lawsuits Exploit Judges' Good Intentions and Harm Our Children

EDITED BY ERIC A. HANUSHEK

Lawsuits over the adequacy of school financing have appeared in a majority of states, but no evidence about their potential impact on students has been available. *Courting Failure* assesses recent court actions in school adequacy lawsuits and their impact on student outcomes and shows that judicial actions regarding school finance have in fact not had a beneficial effect on student performance.

Contrary to popular belief, added school resources appear neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure high-quality schools. The essays in *Courting Failure* reveal that simply throwing more resources at the schools has not brought about a solution—and may even be exacerbating the problems. The legal and policy presumptions of the adequacy lawsuits do not hold up to analysis. The expert contributors to this volume call for more-realistic changes centered around accountability, incentives, and more-informed parents and policymakers.

Eric A. Hanushek is the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and is a member of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. He serves as a member of the board of directors of the National Board for Education Sciences.

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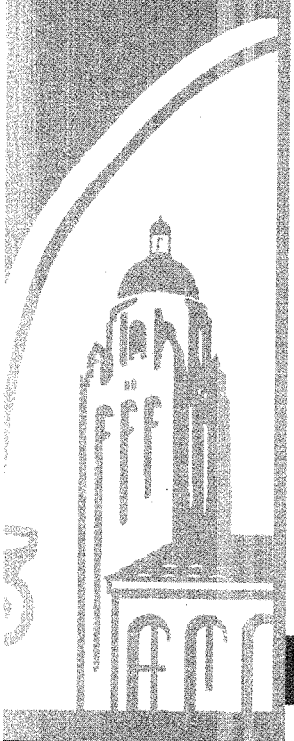

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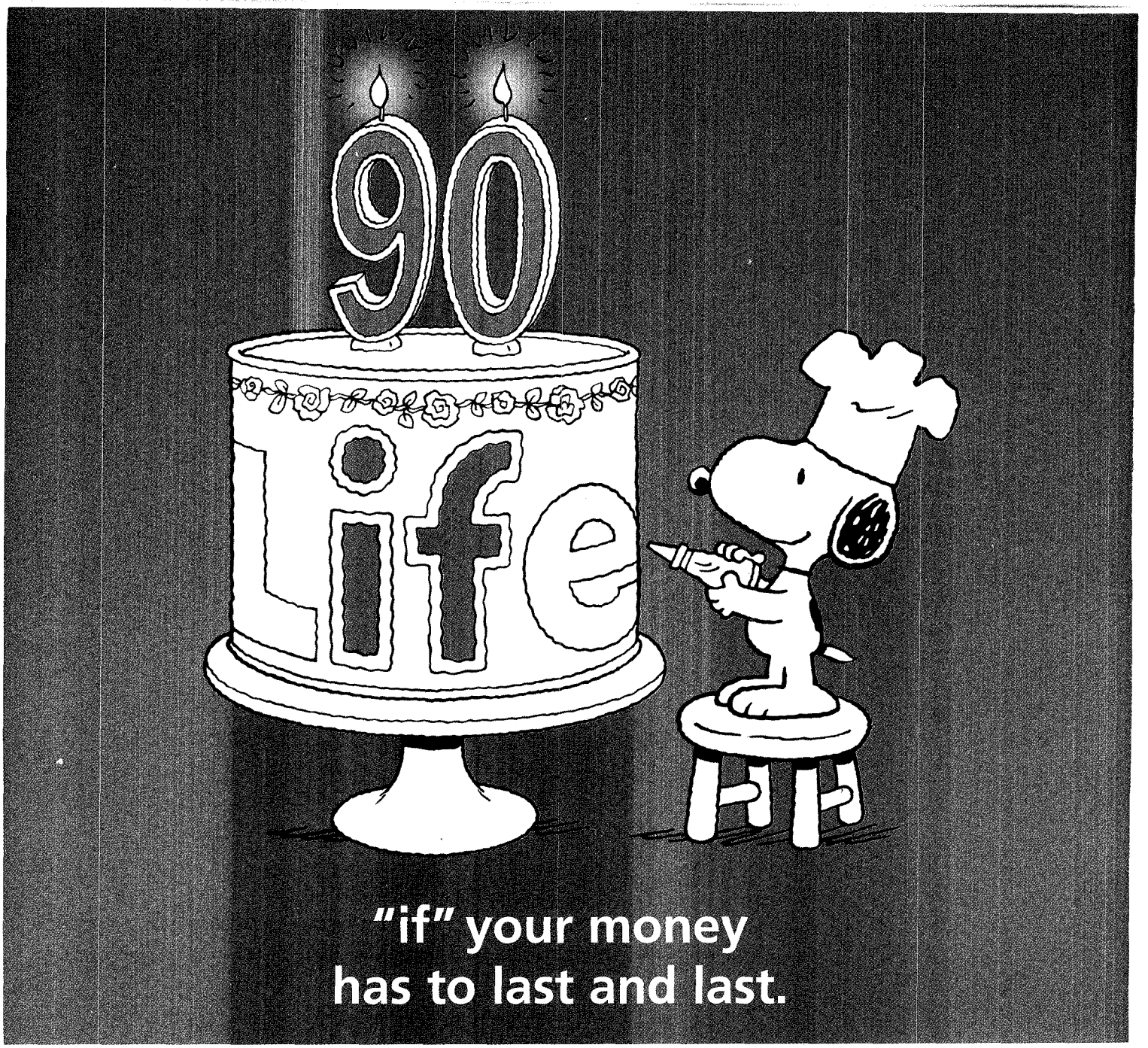

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